

ECHO IRELAND

Journal of the
Irish Radio Transmitters Society

May/June 2004



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The views expressed in Echo Ireland do not necessarily represent the views of the Society or the Editor

**Deadline for next edition
July 30th**



Prime Minister of Slovenia Mr Anton Rop speaking to Ivan, S51DI from the special event station EI25SL, set up by Limerick Radio Club, in Limerick City for the European enlargement celebrations on May 2nd 2004.

**IOTA Contest
July 24/25th**

**Lighthouse Weekend
August 21/22nd**

**Autumn 2m Counties
August 29th**

**SSB Field Day
September 4/5th**

**Cork Rally
September 19th**

**Jamboree On The Air
October 16th/17th**

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News Bulletins and Readers

Sunday				
Dublin	1045	144.275	SSB	Albert EI6AS
Dublin	1100	7.043	SSB	Colm EI3H, Sean EI7CD, Gerry EI8CC
Wicklow	1130	7.068	SSB (as Gaeilge)	Paddy EI7GK
Dublin	1145	145.525	FM	Sean EI5GH, Brendan EI8IB
Dublin	1200	3.650	SSB	As 1100
Tipperary	2030	145.450	FM	Tommy EI7IT, Gerry EI5HJ
Dublin	2130	145.525	FM	As 1145
Monday				
Cork	2000	145.750	FM	Con EI7DJB, Vincent EI7HN
Limerick	2000	145.725	FM	Brian EI9AL, Tony EI2AW
Louth	2000	145.500		Peter EI4HX, Thos EI2JD
Galway	2000	145.625		Aengus EI4ABB, Richard EI5GC
Tuesday				
Waterford	2130	145.650	FM	John EI8JA, Robbie EI8FZB



From the Editor.....

Welcome to another edition of Echo Ireland. Apologies for the delay in getting this issue to you but a combination of factors, not least the magnificent weather, made it difficult to settle down to long hours at the keyboard.

Euradio

The big event of the year so far was Euradio which was a successful event overall.

There were blackspots but it demonstrated once again that if someone wants to do something badly enough, it will happen. It also demonstrated the opposite, that if someone wants an excuse not to do something, they will find it.

There were many lessons learned from the experience both from a central organising point of view and also for those at the coal face.

Congratulations to everyone who participated. See reports elsewhere in this issue.

Field Days

CW Field Day nearly died this year.

Only for the appearance of a new first time entry from the Shannon Basin Club, we would have had only two stations, run by three operators, taking part.

CW is under pressure with some groups finding it difficult to get CW operators for the IOTA contest. It is a pity that the many CW supporters out there do not do something practical to support it, like participating in CW Field Day.

Field Day is the ideal contest to introduce new operators to CW. Throughout Europe, one can hear CW being operated at very slow speeds.

SSB Field Day is not too far away, being held on the first weekend in September.

Last years event attracted a good level of interest and hopefully a few more clubs will make the effort this year.

The Contest Manager will be delighted to give any information required.

Repeaters

The good news story this year is the great progress made on the repeater front.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Great credit is due to Neil EI3JE and John EI8JA for their efforts in getting two new 70cm repeaters up and running and relocating the 2m repeater from Mt. Leinster to the Ridge of Cappard on the Slieve Blooms. These are all linked in a joint venture effort between the South Eastern Amateur Radio Group and the East Cork Radio Group and are providing great coverage over a very wide area. The addition of internet linking through IRLP has been implemented very successfully. Both Neil's and John's achievements are shining examples of what can be achieved by just getting on with the job and not getting bogged down in too much discussion. We look forward to future developments.

National Repeater Meeting

The National Repeater Group is composed of two representatives of each repeater group and most of its business is conducted through an email reflector.

There are currently two repeater applications under discussion by the group. One of them is a routine application for a 70cms repeater in North Cork and other one is for a new 2 metre repeater on Kippure near Dublin. This application is for the first repeater in EI using 12.5kHz split and will be discussed at a national repeater group meeting on July 17th at the Montague Hotel in Portlaoise at 1430. All repeater groups are asked to attend. We believe that several more new repeaters are actively being planned at the moment.

Operating Practices

The standard of operating practices on repeaters (and elsewhere) having without doubt dropped in line with the changes in behaviour in society in general.

The international linking of repeaters with IRLP will give a bigger audience to EI operators and it should be borne in mind.

All operators should occasionally record themselves in QSO and try and eradicate any bad habits they may have.

At the minimum have pencil and paper to write down the callsigns and names of those you are in QSO with.

EI4BZ

Internet Radio Linking Project (IRLP)

By John McCarthy EI8JA

IRLP, which stands for Internet Radio Linking Project, was started in Canada back in 1997. It's a system that links amateur radio systems using the Internet rather than RF links. The hardware required to set up a node is a pc running a specially adapted version of Linux and an interface board to interface the radio to the computer.

It's similar to Echolink, another system that uses the internet to link radio systems, the main difference is that IRLP doesn't allow users interface with the system using a computer and the audio quality is much better.

Each node on the IRLP network has a unique four-digit number, which the user can dial using DTMF tones to connect to another node on the system. You simply select the frequency of your local node and dial the number of the node you want to connect to and the local node should transmit a message telling you if the node is connecting or already connected to another node.

Most important thing of all is to disconnect when finished QSO, this can be done by sending DTMF tones 73. There are also reflectors and the difference is that a node will only allow one to one connection where a reflector will allow multiple connections.

There are 1400 nodes in different parts of the world and a list nodes and reflectors and any other information regarding IRLP can be obtained from the IRLP website, www.irlp.net.

Up to recently there were no IRLP nodes in EI but that situation has now changed with the first IRLP node being set up in Waterford by the South Eastern Amateur Radio Group.

The new node (node 5883) was put on line on Monday 21st of June on a trial basis and is connected to the Waterford 70cm repeater on Mount Leinster in Co. Carlow. This repeater can be found on 430.950 and has a plus 7.6 MHz shift and is one of the five repeaters that make up the Southern Ireland Repeater network.

Important note to all users of IRLP

It is requested that any station wishing to use the new IRLP Node identify themselves before sending DTMF tones to connect to another node,

i.e., please give your callsign, then dial the node to which you wish to connect (you can then call through the repeaters as normal).

Do NOT randomly connect and disconnect nodes and always SPEAK YOUR CALLSIGN before sending DTMF!!!!

Very important: Send DTMF tones 73 to disconnect a node when finished!

The node is currently licensed on a TRIAL BASIS ONLY and it is important that the system is used in the proper manner so that when the licence is reviewed, we can continue using IRLP.

Please note that the repeaters are also available for normal operation without connecting to nodes.

Southern Ireland Repeater Network

The Waterford 2 metre repeater EI2WRC on 145.650 which was located on Mount Leinster for many years and taken off site last year due to intermod problems is now back on air from the Ridge of Cappard in Co. Laois.

Neil EI3JE, John EI8JA, Nicky EI3JB, Noel EI2JC and Eoin EI7FXB were involved in the installation on Saturday 19th of June.

Reception reports can be sent to repeaters@searg.com.

This repeater is now part of the Southern Ireland Repeater Network which is owned and run co-operatively by The South Eastern & East Cork Amateur Radio Groups.

Other repeaters in the network are:

		Input	Output
EI7MLR	Mt. Leinster	438.550	430.950
EI2WRC	Waterford City	434.875	433.275
EI2ECR	Helvick Head	145.075	145.675
EI2ECR	Cork City	438.500	430.900

Full details on www.searg.com

When the announcement was made early in 2004 that country wide celebrations would take place to welcome 10 new states into the EU on 1st May 2004, Paul O'Kane EI5DI came up with the idea that IRTS should sponsor a contest to take place over the accession weekend.

As IRTS had never sponsored any international contest in its whole history, this sounded like a very good idea and work commenced on drawing up the rules and preparing a international publicity program.

Contact was made with EU institutions and our own Department of An Taoiseach and positive signals were received in return.

A week before the initial announcement was due to be made, emails were received from UBA, the Belgian national society, announcing that they planned a major contest on accession weekend. They already annual run EU Community based CW and SSB contests.

Following a hastily convened meeting, IRTS decided that there was no way that we could run a contest in opposition to that of our sister society and plans for an IRTS contest were quietly dropped.

On returning to the drawing board, a strong consensus emerged that if the Treaty signing was going to take place in Dublin during the Irish Presidency, IRTS had no option but to sponsor some event that would generate publicity both at home and abroad and would at the same time raise the profile of Amateur Radio among the general public.

It was about this time that Minister John O'Donoghue, announced the names of the ten towns specifically nominated to welcome the Accession states. It seemed fairly obvious that a Special Event Station in each town, together with a Headquarters station in the Dublin area would fulfil our requirements – and so EURADIO was born!

EU representatives were enthusiastic, Irish Government figures thought it a good idea and so the planning began. At a meeting of the IRTS Committee, one prominent member was heard to state that "It's not possible. IRTS does not have the resources in the ten towns to undertake such a task".

He was nearly correct!

It took some time to identify the individuals in each town charged with the task of organising the celebrations. At national level we were assured that all the local organisers were aware of the IRTS plans and that full cooperation would be forthcoming.

How wrong they were!!

Some local organisers were thinking in terms of parades, food fairs and concerts and special event stations run by local radio amateurs did not fit into their plans.

On the other hand, there were local organisers who enthusiastically received the representatives of the amateur community and made facilities available to them.

Some of the towns had a very low amateur population and where this occurred a club close-by was asked to undertake the task of setting up and operating the station.

This created difficulties of a different kind and in the two weeks before the event the likelihood was that some of the ten towns would not be on the air.

This gave rise to the ultimate compromise "Have somebody run the station from home"

In some instances it was possible to send a travelling operator to assist the local group and in others the station was operated from a location close to, but not in the "welcoming" town.

Ultimately, all eleven stations were on the air over the weekend, although some were only operated for restricted periods.

The response from the amateur community in the ten accession countries was extremely enthusiastic and the push to work all eleven stations was very evident as the weekend progressed.

Outside the accession countries considerable interest was shown in the operation and much DX was worked.

The larger stations reported a continuous pile-up for the entire weekend and this in itself indicated the level of success achieved.

A total of more than 10,000 QSOs were made over the weekend and the organising committee regarded this as very satisfactory.

Some of the groups running the special event stations have written of their experiences and their reports appear elsewhere in this issue and no doubt others will follow in future issues.

Dealing with the QSL cards and award applications will be a task for the coming months.

All stations have been requested to forward their logs to Paul O'Kane who will coordinate them into a workable format for QSLing purposes.

Design of both card and award is under way and a report has been sent to the Department of the Taoiseach and to the EU authorities.

The operation was, by any measure, a success. It was a success because many members (and some non-members) of the Society across the country put many hours of work into making it so.

Difficulties were encountered where none should have existed but perseverance and a willingness to get the job done won through in the end.

Difficulties were encountered on several fronts and these will be examined with the groups involved for the benefit of any such future events.

The truth is that of course IRTS is capable of running eleven special event stations at one time and a big thank you to everybody for showing that that was possible.

Below is the list of stations who participated, together with the location and the twinned countries.

EI25CY	Bray	Cyprus
EI25ES	Galway	Estonia
EI25HA	Sligo	Hungary
EI25LY	Kilkenny	Lithuania
EI25ML	Waterford	Malta
EI25OK	Killarney	Czech Rep.
EI25OM	Cork	Slovakia
EI25SL	Limerick	Slovenia
EI25SP	Letterkenny	Poland
EI25YL	Drogheda	Latvia
EI0HQ	Dublin	IRTS HQ

Limerick Radio Club – EURADIO EI25SL

On the week-end May 1st & 2nd, Limerick Radio Club participated in the EURADIO celebrations to mark the accession of the new states to the European Union.

Limerick City was twinned with Slovenia and Limerick Radio Club was issued with a special call-sign EI25SL for the occasion.

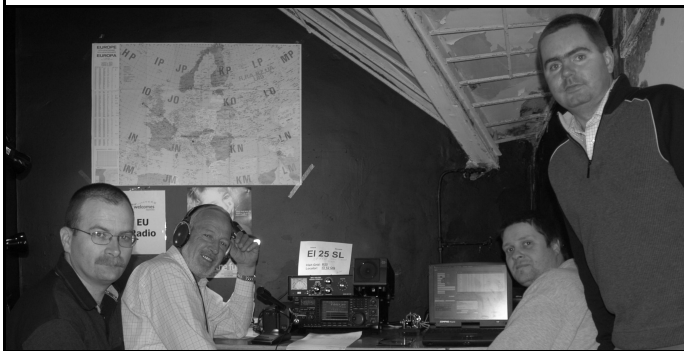
A special event station was set up by the Club in premises provided by Limerick City Council, located close to all the other activities taking place to mark the occasion.

The station consisted of an IC 756 Pro 2 Transceiver provided by ICOM UK and a G5RV antenna. A lap-top computer for logging was provided by John EI5FOB.

The station commenced operation on Saturday morning and remained on air until late into the evening. Operations were resumed on Sunday morning and continued throughout the day.

The highlight of Sunday afternoon was the visit to the station of the Prime Minister of Slovenia. Mr. Anton Rob and his accompanying party, who were greeted by members of Limerick Radio Club. The Prime Minister was invited by Paul EI6FE to take the mike and have a QSO with Ivan S51DI - a Slovenian station, contacted minutes before the Prime Minister's arrival and who remained on stand-by on the frequency. The Prime Minister had a short QSO in the Slovenian language with S51DI. As you can imagine all the cameras were clicking to record this important event. Shortly afterwards the Prime Minister's party moved on to visit the Hunt Museum nearby and EI25SL resumed normal operations on the air for the remainder of the day.

Despite poor band conditions about 1300 QSOs were made on the various bands over the two-day operation. However, all agreed that the visit of the Prime Minister to the station was the highlight of the week-end.



EI6FE, EI5JA, EI5FOB & EI8JE

Limerick Radio Club would like to thank Limerick City Council in providing a suitable location for the special event station and also special thanks to ICOM UK for the use of a wonderful rig -the IC 756 Pro 2 transceiver over the week-end.

We must also thank John EI5FOB for the use of his lap-top computer for logging all QSO's.

The committee would also like to thank the members of Limerick Radio Club – too many to mention individually, who took part in setting-up and operating the special event station and making this a very memorable occasion for the Club.

South Dublin Radio Club – EURADIO EI25CY

As part of the Day of Welcomes celebrations on 1st May in Bray Co. Wicklow, members of South Dublin Radio Club operated the Special Event Station EI25CY.

The QTH was in a portacabin on the promenade, right in the middle of the celebrations organised by Bray Town Council to mark the accession of 10 new countries to the EU.

The emphasis of the celebrations was on Cyprus, which was Bray's "twin" for the day. The seaside location proved to be excellent from a propagation point of view, ensuring plenty of pile-ups for the day. The antenna used was a G5RV.

Visitors to the QTH included Jan OK1FWC (from the Czech Republic) and Janusz SP9JZT/ EI9JN (from Poland), both of whom helped to pull in stations from their native countries.

For the second day of the weekend, the call sign was activated from the QTH of Nikki EI9JF in County Kildare.

Right up to midnight, there was great demand for the call, helping to give a final total of more than 1,600 QSOs in the log.



Mark EI6JK, Brendan EI3GV, Tony EI7JN

South Eastern Amateur Radio Group EI25ML

Here in Waterford which was twinned with Malta for the Weekend of Welcomes, we operated the station EI25ML from the Dome on the Millennium Plaza in Waterford City (right). The event was organised as part of the Waterford Spraoi festivities which took place in the city during the week-end of welcomes. Our thanks go out to the Spraoi organisers for their assistance in making the event possible.

The operation required a great deal of organisation, which paid off in the end as "pile-ups" were experienced on 40 and 20 metres during the event which gave us a high QSO count. Operation resumed on the Sunday from Waterford city and Donnell's Hill, Portlaw, Co. Waterford (just a few miles from the city). Again, this was another successful operation with operators working a 3 hour pile-up on 20 metres.





On The Air

With Anthony O'Rourke EI2HY

Anthony O'Rourke EI2HY,
13 Hazel Road,
Togher, Cork.
ei2hy@eircom.net

Welcome to another "On The Air".

Band conditions are holding up reasonably well considering where we are in the Cycle, indeed the average Sunspot number of 113.6 for the last week of May is higher than a year ago when it was only 83.6 but it's still a good bit down on two years ago at 160.3.

As we approach the longest day of the year in mid June you'll start to notice fewer and fewer openings on **15m** and **10m** will be very quiet apart from the odd Sporadic-E opening.

The CQ WPX Contest on CW had good conditions for the duration of the contest with the Solar Flux Index hovering at the 100 mark for both days and Sunspot numbers at 57 and 63 respectively and while these numbers didn't lead to any spectacular openings it meant less Solar band noise and weaker but persistent signals on the higher bands.

The latest press release by NOAA's Space Environment Centre (SEC) has a prediction for the bottom of the Cycle to be at the end of 2006 or beginning of 2007!

A spectacular occurrence happened on June 8th when the planet Venus crossed the Sun's disk in what's termed a transit and it was interesting to see just how "spotless" the Sun's surface was with just one, lonely Sunspot Group, 627, to be seen.

Band Reports

The only major Contest on was the CW leg of the CQ WPX Contest which always throws up a few head scratching prefixes hi!

In amongst the usual run of normal prefixes could be found 5H5KK, 5I3A, HG20004HUN (nice one to send on the key hi!), HN0Z (YI), OC4WW (OA), XR2F (CE), and ZT6T which was a "last minute" issued call to Vlado, ZS6MG.

There were no major DX-peditions to keep us on our toes for the month of May and early June (there are reports that the "fabled" Aves Island (YV0) trip is still intended to happen) but still, a couple of interesting ones popped up from a few rare locations.

Africa continues to provide DX'ers with plenty of opportunities, and RTTY operators were kept happy when ET3TK

was quite active from Ethiopia, cards go to OK1CU. Italian ops Gianni, IN3ASW, and Franco, IN3DYG, came on from the Ivory Coast between May 20 to 31st as TU2WL and proved easy to work on RTTY, also on from the Ivory Coast is French op TU5KG with a QSL route of F4EVI.

Just a bit further east could be found 5V7AD in Togo with a US manager, WG9J, still chancing his arm with the DX'ers.

5A3A continues to pop up now and then from supposedly Libya, don't waste your time on this 'slim' hi!; QRV for the next month or so is ST2DX from the Sudan, once again operated by Michael, PA5M, cards go to PA7FM. Joining him is Dane (S57CQ, YI9T, A52CQ) who is using ST2T, both ops are working for the World Food Programme.

Two different operators, Ahmed and Magdi were also heard for a few days in a row using the call ST2M from Khar-toum.

TJ1AD is Acho with cards to F5RUQ. On from the Democratic Republic of Congo is operator Cyprien who uses the call 9Q1KS.

Paulo continues to be very active from Nigeria as 5N9NDP with cards to his manager IK5JAN.

Also active, but for at least a year, is Conrad, DF7OL, as 6W8CK from Senegal with planned activity on all modes including RTTY and PSK31, QSL to his manager DH7WW, and of course listen out for Pat, EI5IF, to be active from Liberia as EL/EI5IF until Nov/Dec (any chance of activating the only IOTA group there Pat hi?).

A nice prefix was active from Afghanistan with YA0Y burning up the air-waves, the operator is Daniel, DL5SE, who'll be on from Kabul until September, while YA0J/YA1D, Sada, will be going QRT soon from there.

The tiny Island DXCC Entity of Market Reef (OJ0) must have been a cramped place to be for the WPX Contest as a large group of mainly Swedish ops took it over, principal call used was OJ0SM and they had company as Seppo, OH1VR, was also QRV as OJ0VR from May 24-27.

Down in the Indian Ocean could be found Italian op Davide, IZ3EFL, who is

on from the Seychelles as S79DF from AF-024 at the moment but has plans to go to Aldabra, AF-025. Cards go to IV3TD.

Plenty of activity from Special Event stations during the month of May and there are a lot planned for June.

The addition of ten new countries to the EU at the beginning of May of course led to many unique calls coming on from these new countries, an interesting variation on the call signs came from Lithuania where six stations came on as LY2004E, LY2004U, LY2004R, LY2004O, LY2004P and LY2004A to form the word Europa hi!

Amateurs in Slovenia will be sporting their unique calls right through the end of the year though to celebrate their countries admission into the EU. Listen out for the call sign range S5040AAA to S5049ZZZ with the contest call S52004EU to be used throughout some of the Contests.

It was all the call signs for the end of World War II and D-Day that kept the bands hopping though, from the Ukraine you could hear EO59JM, EO59JS and EO59G.

ER9V was on from Moldova to celebrate the 59th Anniversary of the end of the war, as was TM8MAI in commemoration of the Maginot Line between May 8 to 9th.

As this year though is the 60th Anniversary of D-Day it's that which provided the most active of calls on, from France we had TM6JUN from the Utah Beach Museum, TM6OCH and also heard were TM60GM, TM6BMC, TM6OVS, and TM6SME.

Of course numerous calls were on from the UK including GB6DD (D-Day), GB60OL (Operation Overlord), and GB4OL (also Operation Overlord), future stations planned are GB6LOG (Liberation of Guam) in mid July and GB6LOP (Liberation of Paris) towards the end of August.

Also QRV for the D-Day Commemorations but from the other side of the Atlantic was W5D which operated from the main floor of the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans and WW2DDM which was operated by members of FISTS.

All was not war related though as

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

AO0FL came on towards the end of May from Spain to celebrate the wedding of Prince Felipe to Dona Letizia Ortiz. Cards for this unique prefix call go to EA4RCU and Formula One enthusiasts could have chased ZW10AS to commemorate the death of Ayrton Senna who died in a crash during a race in 1994.

Staying with racing TM6ACO was a Special Event on from June 5-13 for the 24 hour Le Mans Grand Prix race and also active from France during June was TM70AA for the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the French Air Force.

On for just a few hours on June 2nd was R200MIG with a QSL route to RV3LZ. Also a one off prefix aired was 8R40USA on June 11th which was a commemorative station from Guyana run by 8R1AK to remember the 40th President of the USA, Ronald Reagan.

Fans of 'footie' will no doubt be chasing the special prefixes on from Portugal until July 4th for the European Soccer Championships.

As well as the official headquarter station CS2004REP, hams in Portugal will change their own calls like so:

CT1 = CQ14, CU0 = CU04,
CU5 = CU5, CT2 = CQ24,
CU1 = CU14, CU6 = CU64,
CT4 = CQ44, CU2 = CU24,
CU7 = CU74, CT5 = CQ54,
CU3 = CU34, CU8 = CU84,
CT3 = CS94, CU4 = CU44,
CU9 = CU94.

With just over a month or so to go before the Olympic Games start in Athens on August 13th you can hear a lot of unique calls coming out of Greece. The main calls used were SX1A right through to SX9A from each of the nine call areas of Greece and Greek Hams have the option to use SX2004 or SY2004 as a prefix until September 15th. Visitors holding a CEPT licence are allowed use the call J42004 from August 1st to September 15th.

Got a log extract once again from Chuck, EI4IS, who after a refurbishment of his tower and rotator is again able to chase the DX.

Amongst the goodies were some nice QSO's into the Pacific: FO/F6CTL was on OC-131, a very rare IOTA number and also picked up OC-152 in the shape of FO/ON4AXU, then it was back to the Europeans with 8S0ITU, EA6/G4WSB/

P, some short skip on 20m to work GM0DHZ/P on EU-008 and MM0BNN/P on EU-123. Finally one more Island with R1ASP, a permanent museum call on from Kotlin Island, EU-133.

6 Metres

The Magic Band 6m opens up most days around Europe, chiefly towards Spain and Portugal but some late night openings have occurred towards LA and SM land, the only interesting calls I've heard on but failed to break the "howling mob" pile ups were HV0A from the Vatican and the rare Mount Athos Entity with solitary operator Monk Apollo, SV2ASP/A handing it out to the faithful hi!

A few 6m only operations are planned from the Caribbean, look out for VP9/W3CMP on from Bermuda between June 27 and July 4 while Jimmy, W6JKV, and Dave, KD5YDN, will be on Dominica (J7) from June 25 to July 4 and plan to use a 45 foot boom 9 element M2 beam; Mario, K2ZD, and Jim, K4BI, hope to be on from Saint Maarten as PJ7M from July 2-12 with a beacon running on 50.095 MHz.

Good news from Algeria (7X) which has finally given permission for operation on 6m for all operators in Algeria and well known DXer Jose, EA7KW/EH7KW, will be there from June 19-26 to help set up the 7X0AD 6m station, guess the race is on for the first EI-7X QSO hi!

Up and Coming

Summer time in Europe means plenty of Island hopping and IOTA activity so here's a brief look ahead to planned trips.

Our own WestNet DX Group will be on from Inis Mor, part of the Aran Islands group (EU-006) between June 18-22 with cards to Declan, EI6FR.

As already announced on the IRTS news Sean, EI4GK, Ian, EI7CX, Joe, EI7GY, and Declan, EI9HQ, will join some Belgian ops to activate the Saltee Islands (EU-103).

Also joining forces again will be the East Cork Group, EI7M, and the Bristol Contest Group who'll head to their usual spot of Bere Island (EU-121) in West Cork to operate with the special call EJ2MT from the recently renovated Martello Tower perched high on the Island.

I hope to head to the Blaskets (EU-007) myself this year.

Vanni, IK4RUX, has plans to activate Favignana Island, part of the Egadis

group (EU-054) as IF9/IK4RUX for a few days around the June 19th time-frame.

Tim, M0AFH, will undergo a change of call to MM0AFH/P when he activates the Island of Harris (EU-010) between June 27 to July 2.

The main event though on every Island chasers calendar is the IOTA Contest held on the last full weekend of July, this year it's the weekend of the 24th/25th and already announcing their plans are the following:

TM8N will be Francois, F8DVD, who'll be on from Noirmoutier Island (EU-064).

In the Caribbean will be Belgian ops ON4IQ and ON4QX who'll be joined by locals HI8ROX and HI3TEJ to use the call HI3/ON4QX from Hispaniola (NA-096).

A rare one will be heard when India's newest IOTA gets a second activation with AT0BI coming on air from Elephant Island (AS-169) from July 23-28. YE1P is the planned call for Indonesian ops heading to Peucang Island (OC-237) between July 21-25 and back to Europe for IU7I/p on Sant' Andrea Island (EU-091) for the contest.

Spain will be represented by Belgian ops Jose, ON4CJK, and Marc, ON5FP, as EA1/Homecalls from Mouro Island (EU-149), cards for this contest entry go to ON4ADN. They plan to go onto Gibraltar (ZB2) from July 27-29 and then onto Ceuta (EA9) from July 30th to August 1st.

Hoping to activate some of Corsica's (TK) off shore IOTA groups will be well known Island hopper Serge, F6AUS, who'll be on the main Island (EU-014) from June 22nd to July 23rd and will take in some side trips to the rare EU-100 and EU-164 Groups.

Heading for one of the most remotest Islands around the UK and Ireland, Nigel, 2M0NJW, and David, GM4RQI, will attempt to reach St. Kilda's (EU-059) from August 22-25.

If you missed any of the Market Reef trips so far this year the good news is that a group of young ops have plans to be active from there between September 23rd and 26th.

Made up of students, the main aim is to take part in the SAC Contest but they will also operate RTTY during the contest, call sign used will be OJ0YC with QSL cards going to OH6GDX.

(Continued on page 8)

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Heading to the Pacific is Scott, AC3A, who'll be on from Easter Island (SA-001) as CE0Y/AC3A between June 20-24. Also returning to the Pacific will be Ulli, DL2AH, who'll be operating from Kiribati as T30KU from October 8-18 before moving onto Tuvalu (T20) from October 20-24.

In the same region on from Fiji is Lawrence, ex GM4DMA but now on from Alaska as KL1X, who'll be QRV between June 21st through to July 9th, expected locations will be all part of the OC-016 IOTA Groups, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu Islands but a side trip to other groups might be possible.

If you still need Malta (9H) then Jun, JH4RHF, will be on there during a holiday trip between July 25th and August 8th, call sign used will be 9H3RH.

That's it for this issue, band reports and log extracts can be sent to both the snail mail and e-mail addresses at the top of the page.

Until next time, keep listening.

Anthony EI2HY

Z2 QSL Bureau Closes

Don, G3BJ, IARU Region 1 Secretary, recently announced the following:

At the Zimbabwe Amateur Radio Society (ZARS) council meeting held on May 3, 2004, ZARS took the decision to close the Zimbabwe QSL Bureau.

This is simply due to the excessive cost of services that are now prevalent in Zimbabwe.

The main cost is for the posting of cards to the various bureaus around the world. This is coupled with a declining number of members such that reasonable subscriptions can no longer support the costs of running the bureau.

ZARS has recommended to members that QSL Managers be sought if they do not already have a manager.

A number have taken up the suggestion and arrangements have been made.

New QSL Manager

John Browne EI7FAB has taken over from Dermot Adams EI7IX as Incoming QSL Sub-manager for the 0, 1 and SWL series of calls.

Dermot will be continuing as Incoming QSL Sub-manager for the 7 series of calls.

Fingal Radio Club



Dublin based Fingal Radio Club got treated to a Hot Air Balloon demonstration by Balloon Pilot and club secretary Aidan Murphy EI5HW at a recent club meeting. The evening commenced with a practical demonstration and ended with a brief theory talk inside the club premises. The balloon is a Cameron Z-77 Sport Balloon (Aircraft Registration: G-CCHW). It is unique in the fact that it carries its own custom Amateur Radio Call sign EI2AIR with aeronautical privileges on board.

Left to right:

Johnny Maloney EI1CY, Chris Yeates EI7AAB, Andy Earley EI4ERB, Aidan Murphy (Balloonist) EI5HW, Harry Boyle EI9BW, Liam Murphy EI3HK.

First Morse Code Message Sent 160 Years Ago

Some recent media reports have drawn attention to the fact that in May 1844 (160 years ago) the first telegraph message using Morse Code was transmitted.

Samuel Morse was born in the American state of Massachusetts in 1791. He studied law at Yale University but his greater interest was in science. His principal claim to fame was in the development of a new telegraph system and the Code was secondary to that. However the Code was necessary to transmit messages over his telegraph system.

Following a long period of lobbying, the US Congress agreed in 1843 to pay Morse to build the first telegraph line from Baltimore to Washington - distance of less than 100 miles.

In May 1844 he transmitted the first message over that line using his recently invented code.

The message, indicating his religious convictions, read "what hath God Wrought?"

Morse lived until 1871 when he died in New York.

The Sunday Times in concluding a piece about Morse and his Code wrote the following:

"To-day, although his system may still be recognised by sailors - and fans of Inspector Morse, whose theme tune featured Morse Code - it has been largely superseded by satellite telephones, text messages and e-mail".

CW Field Day 2004

For the first time in quite a few years, the weather was kind to participants in this years CW Field Day held over the June bank holiday weekend.

It was intended to run the event again this year on the lands of Paddy EI3AV in Cloughjordan but at the final hour, only two stations committed to travel and there was no option but to cancel those plans.

Thanks to Paddy EI3AV who was standing by to provide the facilities.

Three stations participated, one in Galway and two in Cork, both from the same location.

EI2SBC/p

The Shannon Basin Radio Club members participated in their first ever CW field day from the grounds of St Josephs College, Garbally Park, Ballinasloe in County Galway.

Their weekend started on Friday evening when some team members arrived on site and camped out overnight to facilitate an early start on Saturday.

They used a Carolina Windom feeding an Icom 756PRO with both an Icom Auto Tuner and an MFJ manual one. SuperDuper was used for computer logging.

Members involved were Fr Niall EI4CF, Noel EI6HW, Micky EI5EAB, Fergus EI6IB, Brian EI8IU, Tony EI3HA, John EI8DL, Fr Allan EI3CG and Pat EI9HX.

All participants enjoyed the experience and resolved to do it again next year.

EI7M/p

The East Cork Radio Group operated from a new site near Glounthaune, a few miles east of Cork City and the station was operated by Steve EI9HC and Dave EI4BZ. Steve made the long trip from Athboy in County Meath to take part.

Jim EI8GS and Neil EI3JE provided invaluable support.

They entered the open section with a Carolina Windom at fifty feet. This was a new experience with the Windom and it caused serious RF problems with the logging laptop. The need for a good station earth was learned the hard way.

A desire to watch the Dublin-Westmeath and Waterford-Tipperary football and hurling matches on the TV led to an early finish on Sunday morning.

EI7GY/p

Joe Ryan EI7GY travelled from Dublin and set up in the field next door to the East Cork team. He is totally a one-man operation and erects a fibreglass mast to support a Windom aerial. He operates from a tent.

Joe's one-man station is something that all clubs should have a look at before opting out due to the logistics involved.

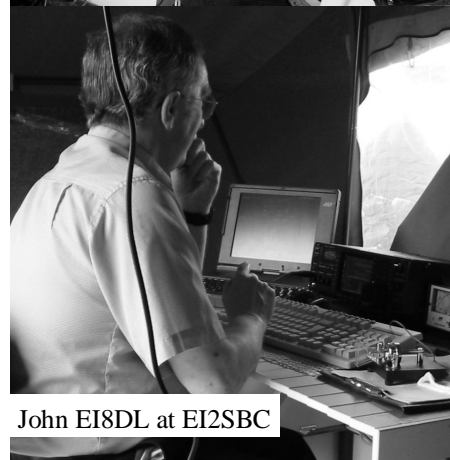
All stations reported reasonable band conditions with some nice DX being worked as well as the usual large number of European portable stations.



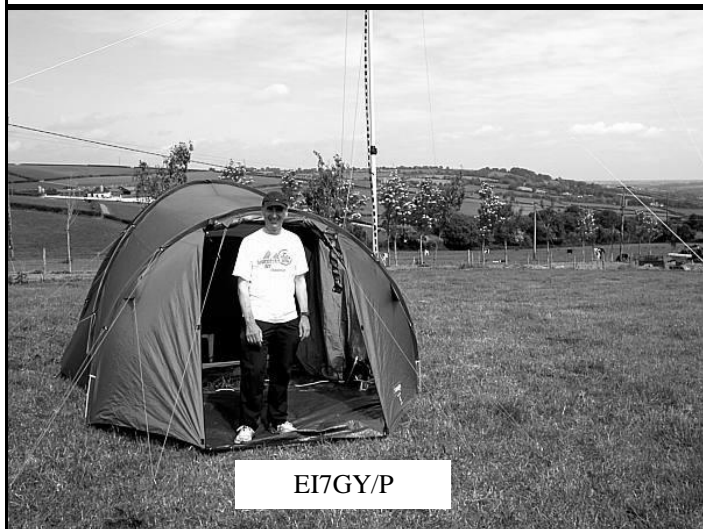
Steve EI9HC



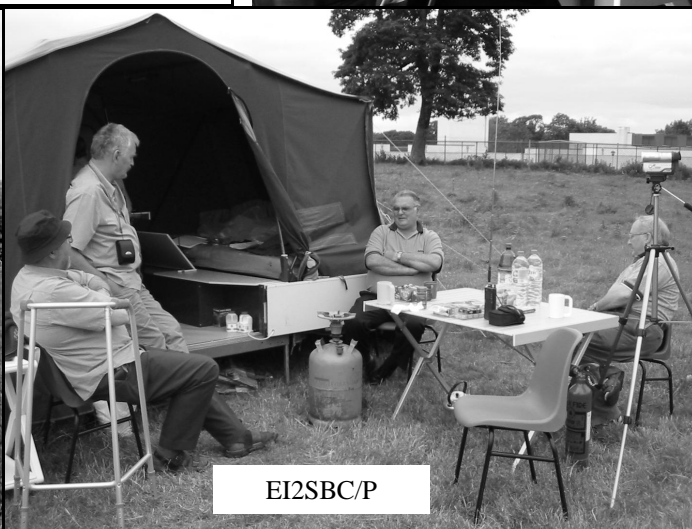
Joe EI7GY



John EI8DL at EI2SBC



EI7GY/P



EI2SBC/P

Dayton 2004

by Tony Breathnach EI5EM

I write this from my brother Alan's home in Fowlerville, Michigan. Fowlerville is a small rural town just over 100 Kilometres west of Detroit. For the past three years I have visited Alan, and at the same time taken in the Dayton Hamvention. Dayton, Ohio is about 400 Kilometres south of here, or just over four hours of a drive.

I had intended doing some QRP CW operating from here as W8/EI5EM and spent the previous few weeks constructing a small ATU/SWR meter and an antenna made up as two nested dipoles for 40 and 20 fed with 300 Ohm ribbon through a homemade 1:1 balun. I also made up many different audio and RF leads and connectors to cope with all possible interconnection situations. I had already bought an old Yaesu FT-7 rig as well as a stand-alone DSP speaker unit on eBay and had them delivered to Michigan.

For a power source I am using the 10A accessory socket in my rented Ford Taurus.

The FT-7 draws less than 4 Amperes at

ised by the QRP ARCI Club.

There were about 250 other amateurs present.

My EI call sign was noticed by many and led to many interesting conversations.

One guy in particular heard my accent and introduced himself to me.

John originally comes from Howth and after many years working in England retired to Greece. In addition to his SV call, he also holds an EI call.

I cannot remember the number, but John's visitor's EI call has VOM as the suffix.

FDIM runs in parallel with the Hamvention but begins a day earlier. I only attended on the first day. Eight presentations were made by well-known QRP gurus including one by George Dobbs

and another by Eric from Elecraft. Eric's presentation focussed on the Elecraft KX1 CW transceiver.

As I have just recently bought this kit, Eric's presentation was most interesting to me. The presentations finished at 5pm and were followed by a "Buildathon". Those who subscribed to this were presented with a PCB and all the components to build a wide spectrum stable RF oscillator. All tools were

also supplied. I passed on this, opting instead to have an early night in preparation for the Hamvention early the following morning.

I arose at 6am on Friday. and having had breakfast, arrived at the Hamvention at 8. It cost \$8 to park in what I can only describe as a muddy field close to the Hara Arena.

Judging by the number attending, I calculated that the income from parking must be over \$250,000 over the three days.



The rig is an Yaesu FT-7, antennas are nested dipoles (40 and 20), Key British Admiralty, homebrew ATU/SWR meter, Radio Shack outboard DSP unit. Location Fowlerville, Michigan. No EIs worked but lots of DX worked.



Pictured at Dayton

Left to right, N2VW, K1HC/EI2HC and K1AJ/EI9IA

the 10W setting. Band conditions have not been great, however I have worked many States but have not, so far, worked any DX.

It's a pleasure to operate outdoors from my brother's wooden deck in the sunshine and in 86 Farenheit or about 30 Celcius.

Of course I always have plenty of liquid refreshment to hand.

On Wednesday I set off for Dayton. This year I was also attending the "Four Days In May" (FDIM) seminars organ-

As it had rained there the two previous years, I had learned to tackle the 2500 stalls at the outdoor Flea Market while the weather was dry.

Consider that if I spent only eight seconds at each stall it would take me over six hours to see them all.

I had to be selective and spent about four hours there altogether. I must have walked many miles up and down the many long lanes of stalls. I didn't make any large purchases there but bought many components and some lead-based solder, which is now becoming hard to obtain due to safety concerns over the lead.

One stand had the largest Morse key I ever saw. The lever was about three feet long. There was a lot of vintage equipment, Collins, Hallicrafters, National HRO, Drake, Hammerlund etc. on sale as well as spares for these classic rigs. Thousands of valves (tubes) were also for sale. Components were dirt cheap. However, I had to be mindful of luggage weight restrictions and also I hadn't seen the inside arenas as yet.

Inside there were four huge halls, and a few smaller ones to boot, housing about 700 stands altogether.

All of the major amateur equipment manufacturers were represented. I collected my Yaesu and Icom freebies.

My unusual EI call caught the eye at the Icom stand and I was called aside for a video interview.

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I used this opportunity to promote homebrew, QRP and of course CW.

This year I noted that there were more peripheral interest stands than previously. along with the many computer-related stands.

You could have your call engraved on the strangest of items. One stall-holder was even calling himself "Suspender Man". He was selling "Personalized Suspenders Showing Your Call". What we call braces to hold up trousers are called suspenders in the USA. I explained the different meaning to Suspender Man before asking him to pose, in his "suspenders", for a photograph.

Another character, that I came across, was wearing a helmet which had a two-foot high miniature lattice tower attached on top complete with flashing LEDs and antenna.

I gave all of the computer and peripheral interest stands a wide berth, concentrating instead on the real radio-related stands.

I had a good chat with Eric and Wayne at the Elecraft stand. I asked them to thank Gary, the Elecraft technical support technician, who helped me solve the few problems which I encountered while building my K2/100 rig. Recently I manned the Elecraft stand at the Enniskillen Rally and was supplied with a personalised (not personalized) sweatshirt for that event.

However, instead of bearing my EI5EM call it bore EK5EM. At Dayton I was presented with a new correctly personalised shirt.

We are used to hearing that obesity is a major problem in the USA. This was borne out by the number of over-weight amateurs using the electrically motorised tricycles available for rent. Some even had trailers attached for purchases. There were so many tricycles about that I had to be alert all of the time to avoid a collision.

I did most of my perusing of stands and prices on Friday, opting to leave any purchases until Saturday. This prevented impulse buying and also allowed time for reading brochures carefully that evening before deciding what to buy. The crowds were thinner than usual on Friday, it being a working day. The fine weather also attracted many to the outdoor Flea Market.



Reading the Mail

By

Michael McNamara, EI2CL

Welcome to compilation #30 of "Reading the Mail" – an account of IRTS incoming QSL Bureau activity from 20 March to 30 May 2004.

During the period small packets (less than 1 kg) came from ARABiH, ARRL x2, CN8RM, Dutch QSL Buro, EDR Denmark, EY8MM, FRC Cuba, G3TXF, JARL, KARS Kuwait, LABRE sections for Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Curitiba, Santa Maria and Sao Paulo, OVSV Austria, RCP Paraguay, RCC Chile, TA3J, W2ORA via EI8EM, YL2GN Latvia and YO-buro.

I was well occupied also with the larger parcels that came from ARI 5x 2kg, CRC Czech Republic, DARC, ERAU Estonia, Box88 Moscow, REF, SRAL Finland and SRJ Serbia and Montenegro.

Cards from the following were noticed and thought worthy of listing: A22BP, CA8VOW, DP1POL, EY8MM, EZ8CW, EY90MT, GX0000, JT1CO, R40G, R1100PS, TJ3G, 2E0000, 3XY1L, 4J6ZZ, 9E1S, 9K5/KA5TQF, and 9K0A.

As well as cards from various Brazilian, Canadian, Croatian, Greek, Japanese, and Russian islands, for IOTA chasers the following caught my attention: A35XM, BN0F, CE0YEH, CE0Z, CO8OTA, D44TT, EM1HO, EM1KA, FO/IK2QPR, KH0/JH1UVV, VK9XC, and YV7QP.

Congratulations to all recipients. For now, all best wishes and lots of good DX.

Michael McNamara, EI2CL.

By 5pm I was getting tired and foot-sore so I headed back to the motel to shower, have a meal and look through all my brochures before planning a strategy for the following day.

I retired relatively early to be ready for the 6am start again the next day.

On Saturday morning it was lashing rain as I drove into the car park, handing over another \$8. I knew from experience that Saturday is much busier than the Friday.

As it was raining, this would mean that the outdoor Flea Market would be less well attended, making it very crowded and oppressive indoors.

I took a quick final look around the halls before making a decision to purchase an Icom IC706MK2G at \$699 from Ham Radio Outlet. This price included the DSP unit and the remote head cabling. I really only intended to purchase a VHF/UHF FM mobile rig, but I couldn't resist the 706 at that price.

I was also interested in an automatic ATU for mobile HF and eventually settled on a Z-100 by LDG at \$129. Having purchased the Z-100, the thought struck me that, at that price, it would be nice to have a spare for the

shack, so I bought a second! I could have bought so much more, but settled on what I had bought.

By this time it was almost noon and the place was becoming jammed.

I decided it was time to leave Dayton until next year, if God spares me.

As I left the show it was still lashing rain. By now the car park had become a quagmire. I picked my way across avoiding the churned up mud and puddles as much as possible.

I was soaked to the skin and changed into dry clothes in the car. Thankfully the car negotiated the soggy car park successfully and before long I was heading northwards on Interstate 75 for Fowlerville with all my new toys in the boot.

There is some doubt as to whether the Hara Arena will be available for the Hamvention next year. I hope it is and I hope that I can be there.

However, the time that I spent there this year were most enjoyable.

They were selling T-shirts there with the logo "I survived Dayton 2004".

I didn't buy the T-shirt but I did survive Dayton 2004.

de Tony EI5EM

Mike McNamara, EI2CL visits Russia

Visit #1

In late April 2002 I travelled to Russia to visit my daughter Siobhán who was studying in Moscow for the Erasmus year of her BA Degree course. During my three week trip, we had the pleasure of visiting UA3AB, Andrew Chesnokov and XYL Lena on 11 and 12 May at their dacha (country home) some 40 kilometres north-west of Moscow. A few weeks earlier Andy was one of several amateurs who said "yes – I would like to meet an Irish radio amateur" in response to an "I would like to meet a radio amateur while in Moscow" request put out on my behalf by Stan, EI6DX.

An unexpected aspect of meeting Andy was learning that he was a member of the 4J1FM, KH4/AH0W, K7K, K4M DX-peditions, the P3A contest crew, and had operated as TA4/UA3AB and 5B4/UA3AB. He was also one of the multi-national team who had activated A52A in May 2000 thereby giving EI2CL, and many thousands more, a new country.

It was with some envy that I looked through the album of photographs taken by him in Bhutan and saw his framed A52AB license on the wall of the radio room. There was also the possibility that Andy was the 'good ears' operator at A52A when EI2CL was found somewhere in the pile-ups.

Despite the fact that this was purely a social visit, to be in the shack of any radio amateur in Russia for the first time was good reason to see what the bands were like at a distant location very different to Dublin 3.

However, apart from coping with the S9 wide-band buzz level, having done some browsing around the HF bands for short sessions during the afternoon, conditions on most bands were poor and I heard very few stations from this part of Europe.

At the same time it would have been a shame to stay too long on the radio and not avail of the clear country air and sunshine outside. To be outside also gave me time to wonder at and to get over the shock of being on an antenna farm instead of looking at yet another pictured on a QSL card.

For town dweller readers, just drool, and bear in mind that when travelling in his car from the local railway station the first indication of nearing Andy's QTH

was the tower and beam that I could see clearly from more than a mile away. It was a great privilege for us to have enjoyed the hospitality of Andy and Lena but I could not avail of their invitation to stay over-night and the visits on both days were necessarily short. Finally, as I would be leaving Russia before the end of the week, we arranged some "skeds". Unfortunately, due mainly to poor propagation, we did not make any on-air contact during the following weeks.

Some months later, Siobhán returned to Dublin and resumed her studies in TCD. By June 2003 a return to Russia was possible for the graduate but it was an unlikely prospect for yours truly.



Visit #2

As events transpired, in July 2003 the chance for Siobhán of a further year of study in Russia arose. She had applied for and was granted a tuition fees scholarship by the Russian government that enabled her to attend the same literary institute in Moscow as in 2001-02.

Also, to make a long story short, early in April last the probability of my second trip arose. Events happened quite fast. In less than a fortnight I had secured Russian visa support, booked and paid for direct return flights, rented an apartment in down-town Moscow for two weeks, re-established contact with Andy, had my visa application processed and granted, and finally, having evaded the taxi drivers at Sheremetyevo Airport, got on board a crowded bendy-bus that was to join the unbelievable moving mass of Moscow-on-Friday traffic. It looked as if the entire population was leaving the city for the 1-4 May holiday period.

As this was the IRTS EI25 activity week-end back home, the possibility of my taking part in some way had to be



explored. The next step therefore was to telephone Andy early on the following day. Yes, he was at his dacha, he was free for most of the week-end, and No, he had not heard about the EI25 special event stations but it sounded interesting. We then arranged that he would meet us at his local train station at 11:30 local time on Sunday, May 2.

The *elektrichka* (suburban electric train) arrived exactly on schedule. Andy was waiting, it was already a beautiful day with temperature at a comfy 18°C and I had a gut feeling that conditions to EI would be good.

Having 'survived' the rest of the journey – the Russian winter wreaks serious damage to secondary and dirt roads – it was great to be back again in the Chesnokov dacha.

Obviously, the next item on the agenda was to head for the radio room.

There, just waiting to be switched on, was an IC-7800. What a beautiful radio – but I had forgotten about the time difference between EI and R3A. After a while, because of the relatively early start and I had not heard any G, GI, or GM stations, the prospect of hearing anyone from EI looked bleak.

Nevertheless, with the benefit of the local DX cluster, EI25LY was spotted and immediately worked on 18CW.

Some 50 minutes later EI25CY was found and worked on 14SSB.

Much too slow! It was possible that some EI25 station operators were still asleep or else they were on 7.0 or 3.5 giving other EI stations the chance to qualify for the award.

With some reluctance, I decided to QRT for a while. The purpose of the visit was not to play radio all day, and so from about 17:30 local, after an interesting tour of the Monastery of New Jerusalem close to the town of Istra and a lovely meal prepared by Lena, UA3AB/EI2CL resumed the search for EI.

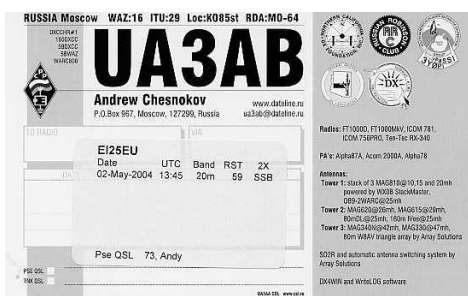
(Continued on page 13)

Although the QRM from the ARI contest was strong and annoying at times, EI25EU, EI25OK, EI25YL, EI25ML, and EI25SL were heard on 14SSB with very good signals.

All replied to the first call. The 'got-aways' were Con, EI9V and Pat, EI9HX; because I did not want to interrupt them before they had finished their contacts, both Con and Pat moved from the frequency immediately and did not hear my call. Pat was coming in 53. Con was 55 and the W6 station he was talking to was a nice 59+20.

By 21:00 local, having worked EI25ES in Galway, it was time for us to say our goodbyes and catch the *elektrichka* back to Moscow.

Later, after returning from the train station, Andy resumed the search and very soon EI25OM and EI25SP were in the log. All except EI25HA had been worked.



On Monday, 3 May, bearing in mind his insatiable need for news items, "like feeding buns to a bear", the story then had to be compiled and e-mailed to Mark, EI7IS, IRTS radio news editor. This was done at a nearby internet cafe and, as expected, on the following Sunday I was very pleased to read my report and reports from other EI25 stations on the IRTS web-site.

The temperature reached 25°C on most days of that week but the weather men were advising caution about putting away the winter woollies too soon.

Finally, in accordance with "It's not finished until the paperwork is done" we met Lena at Pushkin Square at 10:00 on my last day in Moscow. She had with her a small bundle of QSLs, the UA3AB application for the award and a present for my XYL, Joan.

The mid-day temperature on Wednesday had been 14°C, on Thursday it was at a steady 4°C, and on that morning it was back up to 6°C.

I did not realise it at the time but a feel-

ing of "not again" was to happen when I got to the airport; 14 May 2004 was going to be a very long day. Enough said! It was great to be home even if it was 04:50 in Moscow.

Spasiba

In writing this account on the brief radio-related happenings of both trips, it is essential to say THANK YOU to Andy UA3AB and Lena for their kindness and welcome.

Also to say THANK YOU to my daughter Siobhán for being interpreter and essential guide; and THANK YOU to Joan who kept the home base afloat and whose full support and enthusiasm made both visits possible.

New Prefix Maps on EI8IC Website

Tim EI8IC is continuing to upgrade his already excellent website and has now released 34 new prefix maps for free download.

You can get the maps from <http://www.qsl.net/ei8ic/maps/maps.html#pre>.

The maps are available separately or as a combined zipped archive.

If you haven't already visited Tim's website it is well worth a visit with information available on a wide range of amateur radio topics including contesting and DXing in addition to his map programs.

Announcing:

The 2004 CQ World-Wide VHF Contest

Starts: 1800 UTC Saturday, July 17, 2004

Ends: 2100 UTC Sunday, July 18, 2004

Rules Summary:

Bands: 50 MHz [6 meters]; 144 MHz [2 meters]

Categories: Single-Op All Band
Single-Op Single Band 6 meters
Single-Op Single Band 2 meters
Single-Op QRP All Band [<10 watts]
Single-Op QRP Portable Limited [Maximum of 6 hours continuous]
Rover [1 or 2 ops mobile/portable operating from 2 or more Grid Locators]
Multi-Op

QSO Exchange: Maidenhead Grid Locator to 4 digits [e.g. FN41]

Multipliers: Total number of different Grid Locators worked *per band*.

Scoring: Work stations once per band regardless of mode. Count 1 point per QSO on 50 Mhz and 2 points per QSO on 144 MHz. Total QSO points X Multiplier = Final Score. **Rovers only:** Final Score = Sum of QSO points made from each Grid Locator visited X sum of different Grid Locators worked from each locator visited.

Awards: Certificates are awarded to high scoring stations in each USA state, Canadian province, and DX country in categories with outstanding effort. Sponsored plaques are awarded to the highest scoring stations in various categories for both USA and World. More information on the CQ WW VHF Contest Plaque Program can be found at <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com>.

Log Submissions: Cabrillo formatted logs via e-mail to cqvhf@cqww.com with subject line: Callsign [used in the contest] only. Paper logs can be entered on-line via: http://www.b4h.net/cabforms/cqwwvhf_cab.php or postmarked by September 1, 2004 to: CQ VHF Contest, 25 Newbridge Rd., Hicksville, NY 11801 USA. Electronic logs received are posted hourly on <http://www.cqww.com/2004vhflogs.htm>.

Complete Rules: Complete rules can be found at www.cq-amateur-radio.com.

History of the Cork ATV Project.

By Aedan O'Meara EI3EG

My interest in ATV began in 1998 when Con EI7DJB demonstrated ATV to the Cork Radio Club. I was fascinated at how simple the process was and asked Con to let me have a "hands on" on the equipment.

Con had for years before been demonstrating this stuff but being blind I took no interest. However, this time I was hooked.

I got the necessary kit from the Worthing ATV Group and along with EI1CS (who I coaxed into joining me in this project) we began our career in ATV. My first experiments, after getting Tim Watkins, a good friend, to put together the Worthing kit, were in sending pictures around my home. Soon after, I got a few antennas from the Severnside ATV Group and tried to send signals from my house to another ham friend EI7HN, Vincent, who lived about a mile away.

I now know at first hand the thrill Marconi felt when he sent his brother over the hill with a shotgun to signal if he could receive his signals from a spark transmitter over a hill.

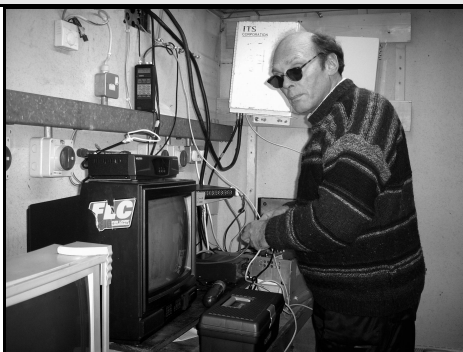
After days of trying I will never forget Vincent's excited tones as he shouted through our 70cms repeater that he had a picture from me!

I subsequently succeeded in establishing contact with my old buddy EI1CS about 2 miles from me and together we soon agreed that a repeater was needed to get signals on 23 cms any further in hilly Cork.

I immediately began to experiment with my Worthing rig and a satellite receiver on a frequency split of about 40 MHz. This was all on the 23 cms band. Again, a bit like Marconi, I was luckily using an old Uniden Sat rx and as it was half deaf, to my absolute surprise the set up worked as a duplex transponder without any filters! Finbarr, EI1CS worked successfully through it from his home, whilst it was on my bench.

I negotiated with the local RTE people to let me use Spur Hill as a transmitting site and started the project on a talk-through basis.

It worked fine, and we had a lot of fun. Needless to say we got ambitious and we soon added a beacon courtesy of Con EI7DJB who donated his Amiga Computer complete with a program called SCALA running pictures and sound. Now we had to approach the problem of



how do you switch from the beacon to incoming signals?

The boys in Worthing kindly emailed me the details of how to construct a sync pulse detector. Fred EI2EG, now deceased unfortunately, kindly constructed this for me and insisted on etching his own board instead of using veroboard. Now we had a fully working repeater.

At this stage we were about 18 months from the start of the project.

A subsequent donation of a 4 screen splitter and a fully working second hand camcorder meant that we could now have choices of screen material and this was achieved by Tim Watkins building into the 4 screen split box a full DTMF tone control system.

The repeater at this stage was using two Alford slots one on TX and the other about 12 ft away on RX.

Fred EI2EG made up the innards of these for me again based on information from the Worthing Group. I did the final assembly myself and to my amazement they worked. We were getting signal reports from up to 15 kilometres away and we were using only 1 watt on transmit.

Tuning these slots was difficult. It involved milling a slot in the outer of the coax on each side of the coax at the feed point on the inside of the copper pipe. In the design the length of these cuts were specified but getting the SWR right was hit and miss. So I eventually got the idea of using silver paper wrapped around the internal semi-rigid coax and sliding this up and down whilst listening to my talking power meter, to get the correct distance of slot that were milled into the outer of the semi-rigid as matching.

I was just able to get the tip of my little finger through the main slot in the copper pipe and push the silver paper up and down. Once I got a good SWR with a test signal from the G1MFG unit on the bench I carefully dismantled the innards of the antenna and wrapped insu-

lating tape around the silver paper. It is there yet!

I also found that a quad antenna for 1.3GHz could be easily made from a length of ordinary TV coax by baring about 11 inches of the inner leaving the plastic on it. Bend this one inch to the right, then two inches up bend it again and so on so that you have a quad with about 2 inch sides. Back at the coax just wrap the surplus around the braid to get any coupling and you have a quad antenna that is not DC shorting to a Sat RX, and it should have about 3db gain!

Subsequently I changed the gear to G1MFG and a linear giving 15 watts out. I did this change, as I was impressed with the size of the modules and the PLL frequency control. I also liked the two sound sub carriers as this would help to keep those using old satellite RX units on side. I also bought a full duplex filter from ID-Elektroniks in Germany and succeeded in getting the whole lot to work on one Alford slot antenna without any discernable desensing.

Giles Reed G1MFG told me, that no ATV repeater in the U.K. was using only one antenna, particularly when they were running 15 watts.

This is the current state of our repeater, EI2TVR.

Getting this licence in itself too has a story. In complete ignorance of the antagonistic attitude of ComReg to ATV I wrote to them explaining my project. Within a week I had my licence for the transponder, EI2TVR, the first licensed amateur transponder in Ireland. Subsequently, all the other ATV groups both in Dublin and around asked for a copy of my letter of application to see how the hell I had done it! Needless to say I obliged.

I wish to thank all those who helped in any way with this project either by putting together kits or driving me up and down over and over again to Spur Hill. Of course, we are indebted to RTE whose head Engineer in this area, John Hearne EI2FG, actively encouraged me to use the Spur Hill site as it was the site of the first commercial TV transponder for RTE under the then engineer, Bob Law also a ham EI9E. He now also has the first ever licensed amateur ATV transponder in EI on site! U

Book Launch

Reporting the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5

By Peter Slattery EI2JA

On the evening of 13 May, at the Martello tower, Howth Co. Dublin, a new book was launched. *Reporting the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5*, is the story of how, for the first time, war news was reported by wireless by Lionel James, the chief war correspondent of *The Times*. *Practical Wireless* foreshadowed this story in 2001 when the editor, Rob Mannion, published an article by Peter Slattery on the topic. The wireless sets used were American, designed and built by Lee de Forest.

The launch at Howth was hosted by Fingal County Council in conjunction with the opening of a vintage radio museum in the Martello tower, the museum being declared officially open by chairperson of the council, Sean Dolphin.

Peter Slattery EI2JA, the author of *Reporting the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5*, welcomed all those present, amongst whom were former members of the lighthouse service and the army, and the president and members of the Irish Radio Transmitters Society. I.R.T.S. members present included President Sean EI4GK, Joe EI4FV, Sean EI3IP, Tony EI6EQB, Colm EI3H, Sean EI5GH and Michael EI6AJB. Also present, was Terry EI7CBB, to whose late father, Jimmy Upton, the gestation of the new book can be traced.

The launch took place in the open air, beside the Martello tower, on a slightly inclined grassy slope, described by de Forest as a 'green plateau'. It is unchanged. On a pleasant evening, eighty guests stood casually in groups, near the tower, overlooking the village of Howth, the harbour and the wonderful view of Ireland's Eye, listening to Peter Slattery describe how a young graduate, de Forest, had come to these islands and to Howth, one hundred years ago, and showed Post Office engineers that his system of wireless operated at more than twice the speed of the Marconi system. Disappointed that he had not been given contracts, he set out for home by liner. Just after leaving Cobh (Queenstown), Lionel James approached him to purchase two wireless sets. Adversity was turned to success and the wireless sets were sent 12,000 miles to the Yellow Sea, where they were used to send war news to *The Times*. It was a 'first' in wireless and in the history of journalism.

After the speeches, those present adjourned to the Howth Yacht Club, where refreshments were provided, courtesy of Fingal County Council.

Robert Redmond of the The Open Book Co., Sutton Cross, Dublin 13, was in attendance and the author was kept busy signing copies of the book.

In the previous weeks, Robert had very generously devoted his entire window display to one book only: *Reporting the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5*. The occasion and proceedings were regarded as a great success and a celebration of wireless.

New Experimental Simplexer on 70.350 MHz in EI

There is an experimental 4 metre "simplexer" operational on 70.350 MHz (FM). This acts as a repeater but functions differently in that it operates only on one frequency. It listens on that frequency for any transmissions, records them and then re-transmits the recording on the same frequency (store and forward). The maximum length of recording is 45 seconds.

QSO's can be slow but it is pretty good when the other station is out of range. With the Sporadic-E season underway, this may be of interest to any OZ, 9A or S5 station when the band is open. This may also serve as a useful tool for monitoring propagation conditions on 4 metres. The simplexer is located on a mountain in the southern part of IO52 square, about 40 kms North West of the city of Cork and polarization is vertical.

International Lighthouse/ Lightship Weekend

This highly popular annual August event attracts hundreds of amateur radio stations at lighthouses and lightships world-wide.

It is organised by Mike, GM4SUC and Kevin VK2CE is the web-master.

This year the period of the event is from 0001 UTC on Saturday the 21st of August until 2359 UTC on Sunday the 22nd of August 2004.

The event is NOT a contest. It is a special event weekend when amateur radio stations are established at lighthouses or lightships, they do not have to be adjacent to salt water, and each group decides how it will operate the station with regard to modes and bands.

Participants are not committed to being on the air during the entire period.

There are no restrictions on antennas or power.

As available space in many lighthouses is filled to capacity, participation in this activity does not have to take place inside the tower itself. Field day type set-up at the light or adjacent field is permitted.

The World Lighthouse Day is held on the Sunday of the event and lighthouse keepers/managers/caretakers all around the world open their lighthouses to the public.

To assist other stations in the identification of lighthouse/lightship stations, it is requested that participating stations using CW add LS after their call sign at a lightship and LT at a lighthouse. SSB and other modes should use LIGHT, LGT, LIGHTHOUSE or LIGHTSHIP after their call.

If you or your club would like to run a station for the event, please register online at <http://illw.net/index.html>.

EI 9A First on 70 MHz

Dave Court, EI3IO, recently made the first ever contact between Ireland and Croatia (9A) on 70 MHz.

Dave made contact with 9A3AB on the 15th of May last during a Sporadic-E opening.

Stations in Croatia have just recently gained permission to use the 70 MHz band.

3B9C, Project Star Reach

The Five Star DXers Association DXpedition to Rodrigues, March/April 2004

By Paul O'Kane, EI5DI & Donald Field G3XTT

The first question I'm usually asked is "How did you manage to get on the 3B9C team?" and the answer is "I still don't know!"

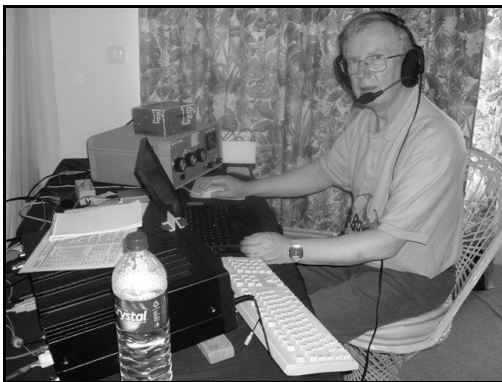
Although I'm a tester rather than a DXer, I had always wanted to go on a major DXpedition, but really didn't know how to go about it. I suppose there were a few things that helped. I've attended the RSGB HF/IOTA Conferences since the early 90s making a nuisance of myself demonstrating SD, and for years I've been one of the few EI members of the Chiltern DX Club. As it happens, most of the operators on this expedition were CDXC members, and by the end of the expedition they all were!

Anyway, in August 2003, I received an email from Neville Cheadle G3NUG describing the proposed expedition and asking, in confidence, if I would like to be considered as a team member. There was no way I was going to turn down an offer like that, and I'm happy to say that the cost was nowhere near the figures I've heard quoted for some other recent expeditions. I had to commit to a schedule of payments and to a stay of at least two and a half weeks on the island (the other option was for four weeks), and I signed a formal agreement to this effect.

Why Rodrigues?

DXpeditions take on many flavours, from small holiday operations to major feats of endurance, setting up and operating from ravaged, and usually cold, islands in the southern ocean. Each has its place in the enjoyment of our hobby. The UK-based Five Star DXers Association, established after the successful CDXC 9M0C Spratly Islands DXpedition of 1998, decided to focus its expertise and efforts towards a very specific type of expedition.

It recognised a need for large-scale operations from moderately-rare (Top 100 Most Wanted) DXCC entities. These are the sort of places that get activated from time to time, and may even have one or two resident amateurs, but are tough to work on more than a few bands or modes. Usually this is because expedition groups are limited in what they take, often as a result of airline baggage



Paul EI5DI

restrictions, and have to compromise on antennas and/or equipment.

Shipping equipment in advance, by sea, gives the option of catering for all those needed band/mode combinations, and makes it easier for newcomers to have QSOs on the principal bands and modes. Of course, the cost of shipping a 20 foot container with several tonnes of equipment is non-trivial, and this then dictates to a large extent the overall size of the expedition in terms of participants – needed for assembling all that kit on site, and then operating it!

Almost inevitably, it means that sponsorship will be required to help defray the high costs involved.

Sponsorship is important, and that's why some team members are selected from the countries with large amateur populations, such as Germany, Japan and the States. This helps to ensure interest back home and, in turn, guarantees higher QSO totals for the expedition.

This approach was again a success in 2001, for the expedition to the Comoros as D68C, with a record 168,000 QSOs. So, not wanting to spoil a formula that obviously was working well, FSDXA set out to do something similar yet again in 2004, this time heading for Rodrigues Island in the Indian Ocean.

Politically, Rodrigues is part of Mauritius, but most holidaymakers to Mauritius never see it, as it lies about 600km and one and a half flying hours to the northeast.

However, for DXCC award purposes and for IOTA, it counts separately from Mauritius. This is a bonus for Yaesu, our main sponsor – they prefer island operations as they are the Principal

Sponsor of the IOTA programme.

FSDXA wanted to build on D68C, this time including some further bands and modes, including satellite, moonbounce and SSTV (slow scan television).

They were also well aware that HF propagation has taken a downturn in the three years since D68C, due to the decline in solar activity, and so decided to spend longer on the air, three full weeks and four weekends, to try and give everyone a chance of QSOs on as many bands and modes as possible, including all the new licencees since 2001, together with the previous VHF-only licencees who could now operate on HF.

The location.

Rodrigues is volcanic, rising to almost 400m at its highest point. Vegetation is sparse over much of the island as there is only the thinnest layer of soil over the volcanic rock, but herds of cattle and sheep eke out an existence and provide meat for export to Mauritius. The land area is almost exactly the same as the island of Jersey.

Rodrigues was uninhabited and was first settled by the French in the eighteenth century, and then taken by the British in 1809. The island was strategically important in those days as it was on the spice route from India and the Far East back to Europe. It was home to giant tortoises and to a large flightless bird called the Solitaire, but they both proved to be very tasty and soon became extinct!

These days, many of the inhabitants, especially those living outside the towns, are descendants of slaves – slavery itself having been abolished in 1833. The population of Rodrigues is around 35,000 of whom 5,000 live in Port Mathurin, the island's capital and major port. The main sources of income are agriculture, fishing and handicrafts. Unemployment runs around the 25% level and the Mauritian government is keen to develop tourism to help increase employment and to generate the funds necessary to maintain and improve the island's infrastructure. It is clear that Mauritius subsidises Rodrigues quite heavily. The main roads are good, facilities such as schooling and health are excellent – with all primary and second-

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dary schoolchildren tuned out neatly in uniform, and the whole island exudes an air of relative prosperity.

Not everyone on Rodrigues welcomes the idea of more tourism, but economic necessity suggests there is no alternative. Right now there are four hotels on the island, and the majority of visitors come from Reunion or from France. This has involved travelling via Mauritius, but the runway on Rodrigues has recently been extended, and direct flights are being opened up to a wider range of destinations.

The two main hotels have their own watersports facilities, including dive centres. The foundation stones have already been laid for a few new hotels, but care is being taken to avoid overdevelopment.

As this was the FSDXA's third major DXpedition to a tropical country, they had used their experience to draw up a comprehensive manual of do's and don'ts, and all participants were expected to pay close attention to it. It included a checklist of essential items to do and bring, such as tools, torches, and tablets, together with vaccinations, travel insurance and other documentation.

In late September 2003, Neville and Don G3BJ, travelled to Rodrigues to carry out a detailed site survey of the island, to liaise with Robert 3B9FR and to make arrangements for shipping the container.

They selected the Cotton Bay Hotel at Pointe Coton as our base of operations, for the principal reason that it is on the north coast of the island, with an uninterrupted sea take-off to Japan, Europe and most of North America. This was an excellent choice in all respects.

Throughout our visit, the hotel staff were happy to cater to our every need, and many of them came to visit our stations and follow our progress. A blackboard in the bar area was kept up-to-date with the QSO totals so that guests and staff alike could follow our progress!

Licensing is reasonably straightforward, though there have been occasional hiccups in recent years due to reorganisation and other priorities in the licensing administration on Mauritius. There is some fascinating history on the 3B9C website about previous amateur radio activity from Rodrigues, going right back to 1957 and including the 1967 Don Miller operation.

The foregoing gives you some of the facts and figures about Rodrigues, but doesn't really do justice to the experience of being there. This really is a wonderful place to visit, with a genuine welcome from everyone. And despite its small size, there is plenty to see and do. Not so much in the way of nightclubs and discos, but if you enjoy exploring a truly unspoilt island, with its own unique flora and fauna, or snorkelling or diving on one of the most extensive reefs in the Indian Ocean, then Rodrigues is truly a tropical paradise.

Getting Started

Thirty of us flew into Rodrigues on 16th March, most of us having taken the overnight flight from London to Mauritius, followed almost immediately by the onward hop in a small turboprop aircraft. The whole journey took about 26 hours from leaving home in Dublin – including transfer times at Heathrow and Mauritius.

There were 23 operators, plus an assortment of wives, partners and children (some of us would fly out after two and a half weeks, with a further group flying in). Robert 3B9FR was waiting for us at the airport, along with Maury W3EF who had flown in earlier.

My first impressions were that, apart from the tropical plants and the heat, the island looked very like parts of rural Ireland. There were green fields with stone walls, plenty of cattle and, at one point on the bus journey to the hotel, the unmistakable smell of a turf fire.

Rodrigues is a tropical country, and we arrived close to the autumn solstice. At times the climate is dry, there have been droughts that lasted for years, but it was very pleasant during our stay, being warm and sunny with large cotton-wool clouds but not too hot (up to 30 centigrade), and with torrential tropical rain showers for a few minutes most days or nights. There was a constant warm breeze from the sea, which dried everything quickly after a shower, and also the sound of waves breaking over the coral reefs a couple of hundred yards offshore.

It seems an idyllic climate, but the big drawback is the danger of cyclones which can strike as late as April each year. Some cyclones cause great damage and, as a result, most buildings are constructed in what I describe as "classical concrete bunker", each with a flat roof of thick reinforced concrete. Robert himself lost his house to a cyclone a few years back, and would have

been in serious trouble but for a long-term interest-free government loan. Traffic drives on the left (Rodrigues and Mauritius have been independent since 1968, and are members of the Commonwealth) and all official forms and signs are in English – however, everyone seems to speak French, which is the legacy of a fairly benign form of colonialism since 1809.

Among themselves, the Rodrigueans speak a French-derived Creole. From our point of view, Creole is unusual in being a spoken language only, with no written form.

It was almost dark by the time we arrived at the hotel, but first order of the day was for a small team to survey the proposed antenna field and start to consider where everything should be sited. We were also delighted to see that, as arranged during the site visit, the hotel had put in an additional power line to the two chalets we would be using as our shacks. The night sky was much clearer than in Ireland, and most nights we could see the Milky Way, something I haven't seen for thirty years in Ireland. I had a small AM/FM radio with me, and a big surprise was to find the FM band completely empty, and only a single local station on AM. The hotel had satellite TV in the rooms, with four or five French-speaking stations and CNN – one day the news on CNN was dominated by the smoking ban at home.

The following morning (Wednesday 17th – St. Patrick's Day) the team split into two, with one half going to town to empty the shipping container and supervise the loading of our equipment onto trucks (there were no facilities to ship the container directly to the hotel) while the remainder stayed at the hotel and started preparing the shacks and marking antenna locations.

By mid-morning most of the equipment had arrived at the hotel, and we could start collecting together what was needed for each individual antenna, mast, cable run, etc.

For simplicity, everyone had been allocated to a team. One team set up the stations (some sixteen in all), one set up the computer network (one per station, plus server machine, and additional PCs in the team room, making 20 PCs in all – all networked by wireless), and three antenna teams set to work outside.

Bob GU4YOX was responsible for running separate supply lines to each operating position. He thought our power-

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line voltage was a little low, and arranged for the local power company to change a transformer tapping to give us the full 230 volts – the hotel agreed to do without electricity for the two hours this required..

QRV

Station build went reasonably smoothly, although we had to relocate some of the antennas even before operations started, in some cases because it became clear that we would suffer from interactions, in the case of the 160m vertical because we were warned that that the seafront location we had chosen would probably result in its being washed away! We were actually very fortunate in the weather, which was mostly dry and not too hot. In fact, the only day of really heavy and continuous rain was late in the expedition, just as we were starting to take everything down.

We had told the waiting world that we hoped to become active on the bands at midnight local time on the Friday, and this is exactly what we were able to achieve.

Every HF band was open, and we started simultaneously on all of them.

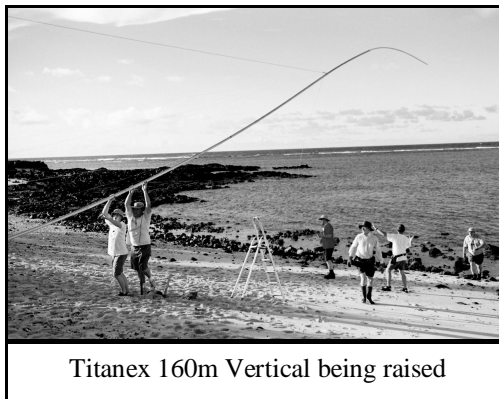
I was assigned to the 10 MHz station – with a full-size two element beam. I've had a little experience of pileups before, my most memorable being one from EJ1000 on Dalkey Island in 1988, when hundreds of JA stations seemed to be calling on 21 MHz CW.

Even so, I wasn't really prepared for the ferocity of the pileups. It was also my first time with the Yaesu FT1000MP and the Quadra amp, so I took a little time to get into the swing of things. I suppose the biggest surprise was that I couldn't get my QSO rate much higher than I've been able to do from home on 100w, although that's with a 5-el beam on 10m.

Later in the first week I had a few sessions on 10m and 12m and really got into my stride on both SSB and CW. Whenever I had a good session, I found I felt better at the end of it than at the beginning – it's a real buzz.

The stations were located in two double-roomed air-conditioned chalets, with 4 stations in each room.

Just to show that nothing was overlooked, carpets had been shipped in the container and these were laid over the tiled floors for the sole purpose of minimising echoes.



Titanex 160m Vertical being raised

There was a dedicated operating position and station (MP and Quadra) and antenna(s) for each band.

To me, this was DXpeditioning in style! The rigs were on loan from Yaesu, brand new and with a full complement of filters, and were treated with respect. The MPs ran about 50 watts and the output from the Quadras was held to about 500 watts except on 80m and top band where more power was needed.

We were all scheduled for a minimum of 8 hours operating per day, and if any of the sessions were on a band about to die (with no later operator scheduled), you were expected to keep going until it did.

Similarly, you were expected to show up early for a band which might open early. On average I probably did about 10 hours per day, and my maximum was 14. It was a tiring schedule, because you could be operating at any time during the day or night, and I became very good at catching a couple of hours sleep whenever the chance arose, but without missing meals if possible.

There were no rotators on the antennas. As the operator, you were expected to know what you were trying to achieve, and to go out and turn the antenna yourself – by torchlight if necessary.

It was a real treat to be let loose with good equipment and antennas from a good site – for once I felt like I really did have the world at my fingertips.

To help us with operating strategy, Eric K3NA had prepared “crib sheets” for each band which described the propagation expected for each hour of the day, and these were updated daily in the light of experience.

For example, the 30m crib sheet indicated long path openings to W6 (which is as far from Rodrigues as New Zealand is from Ireland) from about 1600 local time each day.

One day I found the station free at 1530, and started calling CQ on what was to all intents and purposes a dead band – within 5 minutes I had a steady stream

of West Coast callers.

I had intended to operate SSB and CW in equal measure, but ended up with about 6500 CW QSOs out of a total of 8200.

More than ever, this expedition brought home to me how much more effective CW can be (and is) when the going gets tough. On more than one occasion, I took over from an SSB operator and hit double the previous rate (QSOs/hour) within a few minutes.

I soon learned that there are two basic methods for dealing with CW pileups. At first, I used the very narrow filters to try to isolate individual signals. The problem with this is you need to be very precise with tuning, and you don't always get the other station's call first time – which slows the QSO rate. Nevertheless, this is what I found I had to do for a few days.

Then I noticed that some other operators were hardly using the filters at all, but were just sitting back and letting their ears do the filtering. This takes a bit of nerve, but it is very effective because you hear more callers and you've a better chance of picking out a complete call first time.

Of course, if everyone is calling on exactly the same frequency, it can't be done – but there are always callers both higher and lower than the “up 2” you requested, and these are the ones you can pick off one by one.

Based on this experience, I'd suggest that the best way to break a pileup is to call higher than the asking frequency. In the past, when chasing DX, I've usually tried to find the station the DX is working and then call on exactly the same frequency. I know now this doesn't work when two or more stations do the same thing – you have to be different to be heard, or be noticed, by the DX station.

That means a difference in pitch (frequency) or volume (it helps to be loud!) or speed – it's great to get someone who sends their call fast and once, and sometimes, if you're feeling under pressure, you're grateful for someone sending slowly.

I've already mentioned that I was surprised not to achieve maximum rates higher than I've got at times from home. One of the reasons is that DXers are different from contesters and many want to be absolutely certain that you have their call correct. In particular, the JAs nearly always give their call twice and then,

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when you reply with the correct call-sign, they give their call a third time before the obligatory 599.

Another surprise was a certain K6 station who simply gave his call continuously, on and on, without stopping. I thought he was trying to QRM me, but it turned out he was using full break-in, and expected me to interrupt him – not a good idea!

The procedure I'd recommend is to give your call once, wait for one or two seconds, and then repeat for as long as necessary – but not when the DX station is calling!.

When you hear the DX station giving your call and 599, reply with TU 599 – nothing more. Never repeat your call unless the DX station got it wrong. If you do, it only causes doubt and you end up forcing the DX to copy your call again and compare it with what has already been logged.

In terms of operating, my one regret was that I didn't spend any time on 160m. We had an 85' Titanex vertical close to the water, with rolls of chicken-wire used as radials. It worked very well, and gave many west-coast USA stations their first 160m QSOs with Rodrigues.

One of the nice things about DX operating, as opposed to contesting, is that all you have to copy is the call-sign. There's no serial to worry about, and RS (T) is always 59 or 599. Even if the other station sends something else, 59 or 599 is all that is ever logged.

At 3B9C, we had a very useful software tool to help us get the call-signs right – it was SCP (Super Check Partial), a component of StarLog. SCP simply uses a master list, or reference file, of known active call-signs (DXers and testers). As fast as you type in each letter of the caller's call-sign, SCP compares the partial call-sign you've entered with the master list and instantly displays all possible matches.

We had access to a comprehensive master list which included all stations logged on the previous FSDXA expeditions to 9M0C and D68C. So, when you entered a call-sign and saw a single call-sign in the SCP window, you could be reasonably sure you had the call-sign right – however, you would still listen for a possible correction from the caller. For the times when you didn't copy a complete call-sign, there might be two or three possible matches shown in the SCP window but, more often than not, one of them would more appropriate

than the others. That's what you would send and, in the absence of any correction, that's what would be logged. SCP also indicated when a station had been worked already on a different band/mode (call-sign blue), or on the same band/mode (red), not on this expedition (black) and not on any FSDXA expedition (no SCP match). This was an invaluable feature, but you had to be wide-awake to get the best out of it.

If you have never been on the sharp end of a DXpedition, it is hard to imagine how things must be. A successful DXpedition is like a good film or play, it entertains its audience, drawing them in, getting them involved, but hiding all the legwork that goes on behind the scenes to make the whole thing possible. Hopefully we were able to present a seamless face to the world, but there was certainly plenty to do behind the scenes!

At the daily team meetings, for example, we usually managed to draw up a list of several antenna projects, which often involved taking down one of the antennas to fix a feed point problem or maybe a loose clamp (as in all seaside locations, we were subject to continuous winds, sometimes quite strong). We also had to re-stake many of the guy ropes, as the force of the wind plus the effect of rain in softening the ground meant that the pegs we had originally used started to work free.

We got some longer stakes made up locally, from angle-iron. They certainly did the trick, but proved well-nigh impossible to remove when the expedition wrapped up.

Indoors, the technical team were faced with continual problems of interactions between stations, requiring them to make up stub filters, reroute coaxial feeders, and whatever else might help to effect a cure. This was a moving feast; it seemed that whenever such a problem was solved, a change of operating frequency or antenna heading could easily bring a whole new set of headaches.

We also had to abandon our plans to operate simultaneously on SSB and CW on 80 and 20m, inter-station interference being too much of a problem, though we did manage this on 10 and 15m, albeit with reduced transmit power.

On the computer side, although the Star Software suite of programs had been beta tested before heading out to Rodrigues, it is only when software is used in a live situation that some of the incipient

bugs come to light and G3WGV, its developer, was kept busy, at least in the early days, in tracking them down and recompiling the code.

It must be said, though, that the system was more than robust enough to allow logging operations to continue throughout, and continued to give us management statistics on a regular basis. Each computer held a copy of the log for the corresponding station, and updated the master log on the server as long as the wireless network (and server) were running.

If the network connection was lost, logging would simply continue on the local computer. Then, when the network was restored, the server would automatically upload any "missing" QSOs from the individual station computers.

This was a really neat arrangement and happened automatically in the background, while logging continued.

StarLog had other great features – you could record your CW messages (activated by pressing F1, F2 etc.) at any station, and they would be there, waiting for you, whenever you logged into the computer on another station.

In the same way, you could easily record voice messages on one computer and they would be available to you anywhere on the network.

On each computer, there was a "monitor" window showing all QSOs moving up the window as they were logged – sometimes at an aggregate rate of 1200 per hour. I used to amuse myself by trying to get two or more QSOs logged in a row before anyone else, but this was only possible when the other stations weren't too busy.

Rather more of a problem, was that our network became infected at one stage with a virus, apparently finding its way in via our Internet connection. This took two team members the best part of a day to isolate and fix, and could easily have had major implications for our operation. Truly a modern-day scourge.

There were occasional non-radio problems to be solved, too, such as keeping cows and horses out of the antenna field. In this we were only partially successful, but at least we always managed to shoo them away before serious damage was done!

The Bands

As we had anticipated, 10m and 12m propagation was well down on what we had experienced three years earlier from the Comoros. Nevertheless, 10m was

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open every day to Japan and most of Europe, and often to the States. The north-south path to Europe was very reliable and many UK stations report that we were often loud and workable on 10m while being the only station audible on the band.

We certainly managed plenty of contacts on 10m FM, too, as well as on the more conventional modes. I tried some 10m FM myself and had great fun, even working one French station running 5w – he was really pleased. I noticed once thing about 10m FM that I hadn't realised before – it's possible to hear and sometimes copy stations that are deep in the noise and not quieting the receiver at all.

Perhaps even more surprising was the success we had on 6m. Unfortunately this never extended to northern Europe, we had a daily path to Japan, Central Asia and Southern Europe, much to our delight as we simply hadn't expected this. Of course, the fact that we had been able to set up a stack of two 6-element Yagis right on the water's edge obviously did us no harm.

Operating from close to the equator, the pattern is for high absorption in the middle of the day, with only the highest bands open, but the lower bands start to open around local dusk and stay open right through the night, dropping out quickly around dawn (of course, there is really no such thing as twilight at those latitudes; when the sun rises or sets it does so within minutes).

As we'd expected, 15 and 17m proved to be the real stalwarts, with good world-wide propagation, while 30m again showed its mettle, to the extent that by the end of our expedition we really had "worked it dry" with continuing good propagation but few callers.

Noise levels on the low bands were lower than we had expected, as the team had some bad experiences in the past with noise from tropical storms. And all our antennas seemed to work well.

On 80m we had set up two pairs of phased quarter-wave verticals, one optimised for the top (SSB) end of the band and one for the bottom (CW) end. This proved to be a good idea, as swapping them around showed a big difference in sent and received signal strengths.

We were pleased with our final totals on 160, 80 and 40, although we know that not everyone who wanted a QSO made it into the log. There is no magic formula,



2 Element Yagi for 30m and 40 dipole

of course, on these bands. A decent antenna, reasonable power levels and a degree of perseverance are necessary, and we are aware that matters weren't helped by a degree of deliberate interference on our transmit frequencies.

It's a mystery as to why some of our fellow amateurs feel it necessary to indulge in such behaviour. The good news is that many UK and EI stations made it into our log on all nine HF bands. Typical is one G0 station with a pocket handkerchief garden, who kept changing his antennas as he got us in the log progressively on one band after another. It's these sort of stories that make the effort worthwhile. Perhaps the best is the Midwestern amateur in the US, a keen 160m operator who, when he realised we were actually seeing 160m openings to his area, rigged up a two-element wire Yagi between the walls of a local canyon and worked us with his station set up in his pickup truck. If you think about the size of a 160m beam, and the height required for it to work, the effort he put in to achieve that one contact takes on monumental proportions!

At the other end of the scale, at least one UK amateur worked us using an FT-817 on battery power and a Miracle Whip antenna.

For the specialists, we did manage one 6m moonbounce contact, and several on 70cm.

To our disappointment, AO-40 remained out of commission, but we did manage some satellite contacts via FO-29.

On HF, we made Rodrigues available on SSTV for the first time, though exchanging pictures is a time-consuming process and doesn't readily lend itself to the DXpedition situation.

On the other hand, the more popular data-modes (RTTY and PSK31) proved immensely popular, reflecting the ease of activating these modes nowadays using PC sound card and software, and we were

easily able to achieve new records for QSO totals on those modes.

As well as the huge QSO total (a band by band breakdown is shown in the table), we worked 214 DXCC entities in all, including DXCC on all bands 80 to 10m, plus 88 entities on 160m and 27 on 6m. These totals suggest that pretty much everyone, anywhere in the world, had had a chance to make it into the 3B9C log.

In the space of an article like this it isn't possible to do more than give a flavour of how things went, but many amateurs took advantage of our Web pages to follow the story day by day, another reflection of the times and a great example of how the Internet enhances our amateur radio experience rather than replacing it.

At its peak, we were seeing over 50,000 page hits a day. The Web pages are still up and you can read the unfolding story if you didn't do so at the time.

Non-radio activities.

These DXpedition write-ups almost invariably manage to give the impression that life is one long round of eating, sleeping and running pile-ups.

It's certainly true that some of the hotel staff and visitors found it hard to comprehend why we would come all that way to do something we could equally well do at home! But we did manage to enjoy ourselves in other ways, too.

The ladies, of course, managed many excursions, but were frequently joined by other members of the team, whether to ramble to the next bay, to take a boat to one of the local snorkelling sites, or to catch the local bus into town for some shopping.

Unfortunately one of the knock-on effects of a cyclone near Australia was that we had some large breakers outside the reef for the first ten days or so of our trip, which meant that SCUBA diving was restricted. Most of those who wanted to do some diving did manage to do so in the end, but a group of French tourists who had come specifically for the diving were frustrated for several days, in having nothing to do but sit at the bar and exchange diving stories.

For those who had been largely confined to barracks, we did organise a minibus tour in the third week, taking in the major sights of the island, leaving a few hardy individuals to keep the radios manned.

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On other days, the entertainment was largely what was available on site. There was music and dancing most evenings, and GU4YOX our "entertainment king" took his role seriously enough to MC, sing and even spend some time on the drums!

After the second team had flown in, but before the first leavers flew out, the hotel laid on an excellent buffet supper, and we closed down the station for a few hours so that we could all enjoy this together. There was champagne to celebrate our achievement (well over the 100,000 QSOs by then), great local food (lobster for the first course – DXpeditions are tough!) and, of course, musical accompaniment.

Those who stayed until the end of the trip enjoyed a similar, farewell banquet the evening before they left.

Indeed, throughout the whole expedition the Cotton Bay Hotel staff treated us royally.

This is perhaps also the place to mention the high level of local interest in our expedition. Local press and TV came to cover our activities, and we were also visited by several major local dignitaries including the island Chief Commissioner, its Chief Executive, and others in high office.

They were all delighted to hear that tens of thousands of people around the world now knew of Rodrigues and many would be receiving a commemorative QSL card with more information about the island.

Thanks

The 3B9C team extend their thanks to all who supported them and made this expedition possible. This includes our major sponsors, of course, headed up by Yaesu but including many others, some of whom are listed in the table.

Thanks are also due to all the local clubs and individuals, too numerous to mention here, but listed in full on our Web page and recognised on the 3B9C QSL card. Naturally, all the participants paid for their travel and accommodation, as well as making a contribution to shared expenses.

Our thanks, of course, to the management and staff of the Cotton Bay hotel, to Robert 3B9FR, to Jacky 3B8CF, to the various officials who were involved in arranging permits, custom carnets, etc. and, of course, to our families who allowed us to take part in this unique experience.

The team also wish to thank Neville

G3NUG, Don G3BJ and John G3WGV, our co-leaders, who collectively put in a huge amount of effort to make Project Star Reach a reality.

WWW

3B9C Web site: www.fsdxa.com/3b9c

About Rodrigues: www.eng.uct.ac.za/~chnste010/rodrigues.html

Chiltern DX Club: www.cdxc.org.uk.

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Royal Naval ARS

Saxtorp DX Association

Scottish-Russian Amateur Radio Society

Southeastern DX Club

Shefford & District ARS

Shizuoka DX Radio Association

South Dublin Radio Club

Stockport Radio Society

Süddeutsche DX Gruppe

Twin City DX Association

Virginia DX Century Club

West New York DX Association

World Wide Young Contesters

Some statistics:

Total QSO count overall	153,113
Unique calls in log	37,040
CW total	77,610
SSB total	66,826
RTTY total	5,280
PSK-31 total	2,172
Others (FM, SSTV, EME, Sat.)	1,225

Band	QSOs
1.8 MHz	2,288
3.5 MHz	7,509
7 MHz	18,366
10.1 MHz	11,375
14 MHz	21,594
18 MHz	20,154
21 MHz	29,920
24.9 MHz	16,858
28 MHz	23,535
50 MHz	1,448
70cm EME & Sat.	66
Africa	1,001
Antarctica	3
Asia	27,609
Europe	92,099
North America	29,809
Oceania	1,866
South America	670
United Kingdom	8,582

EI/EJ Stations in the 3B9C Log

Below is a complete list of all EI/EJ stations in the 3B9C log. They are listed in order of the number of band/mode QSOs made.

23	EI7BA	16	EI2JD	15	EI6FR	14	EI4BZ	13	EI4CF	11	EI3IO	10	EI7CC
9	EI4DW	EI5DR		8	EI2CL	EI2CR	EI2GS	EI6BT		7	EI6DL	EI6HB	
6	EI4II	EI6IZ	EI9HX	5	EI2HY	EI2IU	EI3GU	EI5IF	EI8FH	EI8IR			
4	EI0CZ	EI2GN	EI3GV	EI4IJ	EI6HW	3	EI3IK	EI4IB	EI5JA	EI6JK	EI6S	EI7JK	EI9JF
2	EI4FL	EI5JF	EI6FM	EI6IF	EI7IP	EI7IX	EI7NET	EI8EM	EI8GS	EI9ES	EI9V		
1	EI/OK1FWC/P	EI/SP3SUX	EI2GFB	EI2HI	EI2IH	EI2JC	EI2JF	EI2JL					
	EI2KUB	EI3BF	EI3DY	EI3GIU	EI3IQ	EI3Y	EI4FC	EI4GK					
	EI4HS	EI4JE	EI4JF	EI5GM	EI5JF	EI6AL	EI6AN	EI6EW					
	EI6FE	EI6GB	EI6GL	EI6IL	EI6JN	EI7AP	EI7BFB	EI7IW					
	EI7KRC	EI7MRE	EI8AAB	EI8BA	EI8FQB	EI8HA	EI8HZ	EI8IP					
	EI8JK	EI8MM	EI9CF	EI9FN	EI9FVB	EI9HC	EI9HW	EI9IX					
	EJ3M												

EI QSOs with 3B9C by Band and Mode

Band	All	CW	SSB	FM	PSK31	RTTY
160	4	3	1			
80	26	7	19			
40	33	18	14			1
30	25	25				
20	40	7	31			2
17	55	18	36			1
15	84	23	57			3
12	46	18	26		1	1
10	54	14	35	4	1	
Totals	367	133	219	4	2	8

Thanks to Don Field G3XTT for providing the logs.

IARU Region 1 VHF Contest September 4/5th 2004

On behalf of the IARU, Region 1, I would like to invite you to the annual Region 1 VHF Contest, which - as usual - takes place on the first weekend of September. Links to the relevant documents of the VHF Manager handbook are :

<http://home.hccnet.nl/a.dogterom/Handbook/3b.pdf> (updated since last contest)
<http://home.hccnet.nl/a.dogterom/Handbook/3ba1.pdf>

In order to prevent misunderstandings, please note that the /P/M/1 etc are parts of the calls and as such MUST be reported correctly in the log sheets.

Furthermore, please send electronic logs to UKW@OEVS.V.AT (PREFERRED)
Any paper logs may be sent to :
IARU Reg1 VHF Contest Log, OeVSV, Eisvogelgasse 4/1, A-1060 Vienna, Austria.

Feel free to contact me for any query.

Franz van Velzen, VHF Manager OeVSV, OE3FVU/PE0WGA
|Franz van Velzen, Steinriedstrasse 8, A 3062 Kirchstetten, Austria
|Tel : +43-2743-897 824, Fax : +43-2743-897 888, Mob : +43-664-100 3294

Top Band QSOs

John EI7BA made both SSB and CW QSOs on Top Band while Brendan EI6IZ and Dave EI3IO did the business on CW.

First EI QSOs

The first EI QSO was made by Declan EI6FR just four minutes after 3B9C came on air, followed by EI6FR again on 20 CW, then EI7BA on 160 CW.

The first 5 EI stations in the log

EI6FR	18072	CW
EI6FR	14022	CW
EI7BA	1822	CW
EI7BA	7002	CW
EI6S	28495	SSB

Museum Ships Special Event

Beginning 1330 UTC on July the 21st and ending 1900 UTC on July the 22nd the 5th Annual Museum Ships Radio special event sponsored by the USS Salem Radio Club will take place. Work six of the ships to receive an attractive certificate.
For more details visit <http://www.qsl.net/k1usn>.

Island Activity by the WestNet DX Group

The WestNet DX Group were active from Inis Mor in the Aran Islands, from Friday, June 18th, to Tuesday, June 22nd.
The callsign used was EJ7NET and activity was on HF and 6m.
QSL via Declan Craig EI6FR.



Emergency Communications

With
John Ketch EI2GN

Coordinating Panel Activity

The Emergency communications group is continuing to add members to it's ranks and is entering the second phase of its development through a series of Coordinating Panel meetings designed to consolidated its structure and to examine it's role in the provision of voluntary emergency communications in Ireland. The Panel is also examining and refining the training structure and carrying out an assessment of the technical resources available now and required in the future for the development of the service.

Alert Status

Members of the Emergency Network Group are currently on alert status due to prevailing international political conditions, Ireland current role in the European Union and the pending visit by the American President. This is not a training exercise but a real-time activation of the members of the group who have made themselves available to assist with communications in the event of an emergency situation.

Cork Joint Emergency Planning Group

Arising from communications with the Emergency Management Officer of the Cork Joint Emergency Planning Group where the function and role of Voluntary Emergency Communications were explained, it has been decided by that group to hold a forum in September next in order to facilitate liaison between the voluntary organisations listed in the plan and the people who are engaged on it on a full time basis. This is an opportunity for the group to integrate with both voluntary and professional services, initially at a local level. It is also importantly, a real opportunity to forge links with groups such as the ambulance service, police, voluntary ambulance groups and the civil defence, which can be developed at a national level.

Training

Arising from the alert status situation and the opportunity to participate in the Cork Joint Emergency Planning Group forum the coordinating panel are prioritising the training programme. Two methods of training people are under examination at the moment, one centralised training sessions held over a period of time which are attended by members an two, a system of distance training using email communication and incremental accreditation.

AREN

The title Amateur Radio Emergency Network is under examination at the moment for two reasons. One, in Ireland there are no Radio Amateurs, but Radio Experimenters, and two, while the titles Radio Amateur and Radio Experimenter are both admirable and something to be justly and proactively proud of, we should not present these words to those who may need our help in a life or death situation. Imagine being assisted at the scene of an accident by medical, fire and rescue, or other personnel with the words Amateur or Experimenter clearly visible on their Hi Vis apparel? Suggestions for a name for the group are welcome and a small prize & public recognition in the pages of Echo Ireland will be offered to the author of any that may eventually be used.

International

Ongoing liaison is taking place with Paul Gaskell G4MWO, RSGB Radio Communications Voluntary Services (RCVS) National Co-ordinator and with IARU Region 1 Emergency Co-ordinator: Gordon Adams, G3LEQ.

Your Views and Input.

Views of members and interested parties are always welcome on these or on any EmerComms subject. Applications for membership, from individuals or from groups who provide voluntary community communications services throughout the country are always very welcome.

Islands On The Air Contest All Time EI Records

Call	QSOs	Mults	Points
Multi-Operator			
EI7M	2,632	417	6,194,952
EI1DD	2,312	400	5,715,600
EJ4GK/P	1,867	331	4,916,343
Island Multi-Op Low Pwr, Single Elements			
EJ7M	1,336	239	1,924,428
SO 24 Hour Mixed			
EI5DI	1,052	190	1,243,718
EI5DI	1,149	152	1,142,128
EI5DI	615	115	492,545
SO 24 Hour CW			
EI4BZ	660	115	477,480
EI4VTC/P	578	64	250,752
SO 24 Hour SSB			
EI8IR	1,642	223	2,222,148
EI8GS	1,318	155	1,098,330
EI7IQ	936	151	983,916
SO 12 Hour Mixed			
EI5DI	567	84	260,820
EI4DW	540	88	251,328
EI4DW	152	41	53,464
SO 12 Hour CW			
EI5GM	355	92	219,420
EI4DW	382	76	181,944
EI4DW	289	85	181,815
SO 12 Hour SSB			
EI7GL	424	151	612,456
EJ9HQ	643	106	528,834
EI7CC	400	129	450,468

IOTA Contest 2004 July 24/25th 1200-1200

A New EI First on 6m

Thos Caffrey EI2JD is claiming another first having worked ST2DX (KK65) on 6 metres CW on June 18th at 1823. Conditions on 6 metres have been variable and seems well down on lasts conditions.

Please submit your squares totals to EI2JD for the annual squares table.

Packet Radio Developments in the Limerick Area

By Michael Watterson, EI9FEB

Repeaters Info

New repeater maps including Packet are at:

<http://members.boards.ie/eirepeaters.htm>

Newcomers to Packet may find the network map with list of commands useful.

Any corrections and comments to ei9feb@eircom.net

70cm, Packet and ATV coverage maps soon.

Packet Changes

A new node, EI4LRC-2, is on air testing at IO52PO for Limerick Radio Club on 144.600 FM 1200 baud.

It is the old LRC packet BBS, but instead of BBS it has Private Usenet (newsgroups), Web pages optimised for packet and soon email and ftp.

There is no connection to actual internet, but you use actual windows Internet programs such as Outlook, Explorer or Netscape with a virtual IP over AX25 adaptor from MixW, AV2AWG packet engine or Flexnet.

No TNC is required, just sound card, FM rig and ideally Mixw software from www.mixw.net.

Other solutions including real TNC with KISS to IP over AX25 network software works. No Connect or Text commands are needed for operation of EI4LRC-2 IP Services.

The address is 44.155.4.124 for Newsserver, [Http://](http://), ftp and email. Email and FTP are still under development (i.e. they don't yet work!)

You need a suitable address in your virtual Network adaptor.

Details from ei9feb@eircom.net

It is hoped to directly link EI4PKT with EI7M-4 soon and upgrade the 144.600 net to 4800 baud.

The new EI4LRC-2 is also working as Digipeater to EI4PKT, potentially allowing users in Shannon, Newcastle West, Ennis, Bruff and Doon to access the Packet network via Patrickswell

On Wednesday 22.00 BST 9th June 2004 EI3JA Peter (QTH Dublin Road area Limerick) loaded Web pages via packet from EI4LRC-2 at Patrickswell 1200 baud 144.600MHz using MixW and soundcard without a TNC.

This is a dedicated Web, News and Mail server ONLY accessible on Packet.

Brendan EI0CZ and Mike EI9FEB also visited the Limerick Repeater site to investigate linking EI4PKT (144.600) and EI7M-4 (70.325) at the site. Hopefully the EI4PKT node will be updated to allow the rest of EI to access EI4LRC-2, the new IP based alternative to traditional BBS on Packet.

Additional info at <http://members.boards.ie/watty/ei4lrpacket.htm>

Dze EI4HG is the administrator of ampr.org addresses in EI

Michael Watterson EI9FEB

11 Laurel Park,
Patrickswell,

Co. Limerick.

061-215842, Mobile 085 702 9475

South Dublin Radio Club

Congratulations to Robert Fitzsimons, a member of the SDR Committee and who recently passed the Theory Examination: Robert has now been issued with the call sign EI2GQB

At an Extraordinary General Meeting held on 4th May, club members adopted a new Constitution.

The main reason for the change in the Constitution was to make it easier for special activities such as contests and special event stations to be run by club members.

Theory classes have been running at SDR on Tuesday the 18th of May at 8 p.m. at Ballyroan Community Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham. Visitors are always welcome and those intending to sit the next exam should attend the classes as soon as possible.

Mayo Radio Experimenters Network

Results of the Mayo REN club competition for April were as follows:

1st John Corless EI7IQ, 2nd Brendan Minish EI6IZ, 3rd John McAndrew EI3JM, 4th John, Brown EI7FAB, 5th Jimmy Kelly EI2GCB, 6th Terry Ebdon EI9IW.

The May meeting planned activities for the summer and discussed the Club's outing to the Enniskillen Rally. The evening was most enjoyable and plans were made for the trip to the Bangor Rally.

At the June meeting of the Mayo REN, members discussed plans for the activation of an offshore island in July and a club trip to Germany in the autumn. Plans were also made for the club trip to the Bangor & DARS Rally.

The results of the May contest for members was announced as follows; 1st was John Corless EI7IQ, in 2nd place was John Browne EI7FAB, in 3rd place was Brendan Minish EI6IZ and 4th was John McAndrew EI3JM.

The club meets on the first Wednesday of each month in Stensons, Ballyvary at 9 pm. Visitors always welcome.

IOTA Contest 2004 - July 24/25th

Announced operations for this years contest:

Bere Island, EI2MT: a joint venture between the Bristol Contest Group and the East Cork Group.

Saltee Islands: a joint venture between EI4GK, EI7GY, EI9HQ, EI7CX and a few operators from Belgium.

Aran Islands: South Dublin/Glengormley joint venture to Inish Oir

Blasket Islands: Anthony EI2HY

The CQ WPX Awards Program

The CQ WPX Award recognizes the accomplishments of confirmed QSOs with the many prefixes used by amateurs throughout the world. Separate, distinctively marked certificates are available for SSB, CW, and Mixed (CW and SSB/Phone). Please note that CQ is no longer issuing VPX and WPNX awards.

1. Applications

- A. All applications for WPX certificates (and endorsements) must be submitted on the official application form (CQ 1051). This form may be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped, business size (4 × 9 inch) envelope to the WPX Award Manager, Norm Koch, WN5N, P.O. Box 593, Clovis, NM 88101. It is also available on CQ's website at <www.cq-amateur-radio.com/awardapps.html>. Computer printouts with a minimum of 10-point size type are acceptable provided they conform somewhat to the CQ 1051 application form.
- B. All call letters must be in strict alphabetical order and **only** the entire call letters are required and must be shown.
- C. All QSOs must be made from the same country.
- D. All entries must be clearly legible.
- E. Certificates are issued for HF (160–10) for the following modes and number of prefixes. VHF contacts do not count for the WPX Awards program. WARC band contacts are not acceptable. Cross mode QSOs are not valid for the CW or Two-way SSB certificates.
Mixed (CW and SSB/Phone only): 400 prefixes confirmed.
CW: 300 prefixes confirmed.
Two-way SSB: 300 prefixes confirmed.
A separate application is required for each mode.
- F. Cards need not be sent, but they must be in the possession of the applicant. Any and all cards may be requested by the WPX Award Manager or by the CQ Awards Committee.
- G. The application fee for each certificate is \$6.00 for CQ subscribers (subscribers must include a recent CQ mailing label, or a photocopy of it) and \$12.00 for non-subscribers, or the equivalent in IRCs at \$.50 each.
- H. All applications and endorsement requests should be sent to the WPX Award Manager.

2. Endorsements

- A. Prefix endorsements are issued for each 50 additional prefixes submitted. Minimum submission at any one time is 50 prefixes.
- B. Band endorsements are available for working the following numbers of prefixes on the various bands:
1.8 MHz – 50, 3.5 MHz – 175, 7 MHz – 250, 14 MHz – 300, 21 MHz – 300, 28 MHz – 300.
- C. Continent endorsements are available for working the following numbers of prefixes in the respective continents:
North America 160, South America 95, Europe 160, Africa 90, Asia 75, Oceania 60.
- D. Endorsement applications may be submitted by computer printout or on CQ form 1051. Use a separate application for each mode of your endorsement application.
- E. For prefix endorsements, list only additional call letters confirmed since the last endorsement application.
- F. A self-addressed, stamped envelope or proper IRCs for surface or airmail return is required, and \$1.00 or 2 IRCs for each endorsement sticker.

3. Prefixes

- A. The letter/numeral combinations which form the first part of the amateur call will be considered the prefix.
Examples: K6, N6, WD4, HG1, HG19, WB2, KC2, OE2, U3, ZS66, etc. Any difference in the numbering, lettering, or order of same shall constitute a separate prefix.
- B. A prefix will be considered if licensed by the governing author-

ity in the country of operation after November 15, 1945.

- C. In cases of portable operation in another country or call area, the portable designator would then become the prefix. Example: WN5N/7 would count as W7, J6/WN5N would count as J6, KH6/WN5N would count as KH6, etc. Portable designators without numbers will be assigned a zero (Ø) at the end of the designator to form the prefix. Example: LX/WN5N would count as LXØ. When claiming a prefix which has been sent as KC5KKY/XV5, for example, if you are claiming the XV5 for credit, it is requested that the claimed prefix be listed in the proper alphabetical position, such as XV5/KC5KKY, if for XV5, or KC5KKY/XV5 if for KC5. The portable prefix must be an authorized prefix of the country/area of operation.
Maritime mobile, mobile, /A, /E, /J, /P, or interim license class identifiers do not count as prefixes.
- D. All calls without numbers will be assigned a zero (Ø) plus the first two letters to form a prefix. Examples: XEFTJW would count as XEØ, RAEM would count as RAØ, AIR as AIØ, etc.

WPX Honor Roll

The WPX Honor Roll recognizes the operators and stations that maintain a high standing in confirmed, current prefixes. The rules, therefore, reflect the belief that Honor Roll membership should be accessible to all active radio amateurs and not be unduly advantageous to the "old timers." With the exceptions listed below, all general rules for WPX apply toward Honor Roll credit.

A minimum of 600 prefixes is required to be eligible for the WPX Honor Roll. No certificates are issued, but a listing of members appears in CQ every other month.

- A. Only current prefixes will be counted toward the WPX Honor Roll standings. A list of prefixes to be removed from the Honor Roll is available from the WPX Award Manager for an SASE. Prefixes will be deleted from the Honor Roll listing two years after they are no longer authorized for use by the governing authority or by the ITU.
- B. Special-issue prefixes (i.e., OF, OS, 4A, etc.) will be considered current for as long as they are assigned to a particular country and deducted as credit for Honor Roll standings after cessation of their use or assignment.
- C. Honor Roll applicants must submit their list of current prefixes (entire call required) separate from their regular WPX applications.
Use regular form 1051 or a computer printout as long as it conforms closely to the 1051 form. Indicate Honor Roll and mode desired. Forms may be obtained by sending a business-size, self-addressed, stamped envelope or 1 IRC (foreign stations send extra postage or IRCs if airmail is desired) to the WPX Award Manager. A separate application must be made for each mode. Lifetime Honor Roll fee for each mode is \$10.00.
A computer printout of your individual Honor Roll file may be obtained from the WPX Award Manager for \$6.00 plus a self-addressed envelope and sufficient loose postage for return. Excess postage will be returned.
- D. Endorsements for the Honor Roll may be made for 25 or more prefixes. A \$1.00 endorsement fee plus an SASE or IRC is to be included. For prefixes by countries see the *Callbook* listings.

WPX Award of Excellence

This is the ultimate award for the prefix DXer. The requirements are 1000 prefixes in Mixed mode, 600 prefixes in SSB, 600 prefixes in CW, all 6 continental endorsements, and the 5 band endorsements 80–10 meters.

A special 160 meter endorsement bar is also available.

The WPX Award of Excellence plaque fee is \$60.00.

The 160 meter bar is \$6.50.

(effective February 2004)

Tipperary Amateur Radio Group, EI25LY

Pictures below show Tipperary Amateur Radio Group setting up EI25LY and also EI3FFB and EI2JB working in the "Icom HF Tent"....EI25LY portable from the QTH of EI3EMB in Co.Kilkenny.

Participating were John EI7IG, Paul EI3EMB, Eddie EI3FFB, John EI2JB and Eric EI/SP3SUX,

Unfortunately we were unable to secure a site in Kilkenny city for the event due to insurance issues and bureaucracy beyond belief. That said EI7TRG members activated the event callsign and had an extremely enjoyable time.

Special thanks to Paul EI3EMB who not only provided an exceptional site for the stations but also provided copious quantities of fine food and beverages courtesy of his good XYL Catherine.

Equipment used: Icom 756PROII. Icom 756 PRO, FT 1000MP, FT920 and Kenwood 2000 running into a selection of Carolina Windoms and G5RV's.

The group also ran tests with a number of vertical antennas. Propagation was good and a lot of contacts were made with LY and other European stations using CW and phone.

The event gave TRG members the opportunity to air all the big rigs and antennas and many lessons were learned making the entire event a valuable experience.

The insurance requirements of Kilkenny city council and other local Govt affiliates posed a valuable talking subject for the following TRG monthly meeting. In doing so TRG learned that we were unable to obtain insurance cover for any events/portable activations as our national body (IRTS) does not have public liability cover thereby rendering it's affiliates un-insurable !!!

Hopefully this article will stimulate a response from other groups and possibly some suggestions as to other groups insurance arrangements. The whole insurance question would be well worth discussing at other club meetings especially as the portable season is well under way.

Best Regards

EI2JB/ J.A. Burke /Chairman Tipperary Amateur Group



Dublin Ladies Mini-Marathon

Terenure College Radio Club together with South Dublin Radio Club members provided emergency communications for the Dublin Ladies mini-marathon held on the June bank holiday Monday.

While there were no major emergencies to be dealt with, the communications system worked flawlessly.

Thanks to all the operators who participated and to the experimenter community who kept the frequencies clear for the duration of the event

European Union Enlargement Award

To mark the enlargement of the European Union on 1st May 2004, the Irish Radio Transmitters Society (IRTS) is issuing an Award for amateurs who contact Special Event Stations with the prefix EI25 during the weekend 1st/2nd May 2004.

The Special Event Stations were located in ten Irish cities/towns which have each been twinned with a new member state of the European Union. They are as follows:

Callsign	QTH	Twinned with New Member State
EI25CY	Bray	Cyprus
EI25ES	Galway	Estonia
EI25HA	Sligo	Hungary
EI25LY	Kilkenny	Lithuania
EI25ML	Waterford	Malta
EI25OK	Killarney	Czech Republic
EI25OM	Cork	Slovakia
EI25SL	Limerick	Slovenia
EI25SP	Letterkenny	Poland
EI25YL	Drogheda	Latvia

In addition, an IRTS HQ station with the callsign **EI25EU** was operational from Dublin.

Award Requirements

To qualify for the Award stations should work the ten EI25 stations listed above but may use the HQ station EI25EU as a "joker" for one missing contact (see also "Substitute Stations" below).

Substitute Stations

If a contact with one or more of the EI25 stations is not made it can be substituted by 2 contacts with stations located in the relevant new member country, e.g. if EI25HA is not worked it may be replaced by QSOs with 2 HA stations.

However, a total of 3 EI25 stations must be included in the Award submission.

While EI25 stations were only be QRV on 1st and 2nd May 2004, contacts with the Substitute Stations may be made up to 31st May 2004.

The Award is available to SWLs on a "heard" basis.

QSL cards are not required but applications should be submitted by way of log entries certified by two licensed amateurs.

All applications for the Award must be received by 31st December 2004.

The Award will not be endorsed for band or mode.

A fee of €5 or 3 IRCs should accompany the application which should be addressed to:

IRTS Awards Manager,
P.O. Box 462,
Dublin 9,
Ireland.

Cork Radio Club Annual Rally

**Blarney Park Hotel
Blarney, Co. Cork.**

**Sunday September 19th
2004**

Outgoing QSL Bureau

Please mail your cards directly to
The Outgoing Bureau Manager

**Anthony Baldwin EI8JK,
Rathlin, Kilcrohane,
Co. Cork.**
Ei8jk@amsat.org

Cards sent to PO Box 462 can be delayed

4 Metre Activity Nights

First Tuesday every month

**70.2625 MHz FM
2000-2200**

Great Blasket Island

Sean EI4GK and Mark EI6JK spent a few days on Great Blasket Island from the 19th to the 21st May. They were lucky to have fine weather and had no problems in getting on or off the island. QSL to the home calls.

XE1/EI7GK

Paddy EI7GK will be QRV from his daughters house in Mexico in July, using the callsign XE1/EI7GK.

He will be on 14.268 MHz and 21.317 MHz beaming towards Ireland.

When he was there in 2002 he found the best time to get propagation to EI was early morning from 0600 to 0800 Irish time.

He will be keen to work any EI, GI or MI stations.

Beidh Fáilte ríomh QSO as Gaeilge.

Members Advertisements

For Sale: Yaesu FT-7100M Dual band, Dual Recieve, VHF/UHF Transciever, €250 ono.

Fairhaven RD-500VX Receiver, 0-1750 MHz, €750 ono
jronan@tssg.org, 051-302938

For Sale: Portable Alum tube telescopic mast. Manually extends to 24ft and retracts to 6ft. Top section diameter 40mm, lower section diameter 50mm. Price €120

Precut 45m lengths of 15 awg enamel copper wire, suitable for dipole construction. Price €20

Tel: 086-3336386. EI9FVB@iolfree.ie

For Sale: Yaesu FT847 with FC20 Auto Tuner. As new. Boxed with manuals. €1,500.00 o.n.o.
Tony EI9IL 087-9912341

Wanted on loan: Practical Wireless magazine of September 2003. Will reimburse costs and return.
Ian EI3Y 045-485377

For Sale: Icom 8500, as new, boxed .. €1,300.00

NEIM 1031. Inline DSP noise reduction. As new €150.00

AR8600MKII, as new, boxed €800.00

AR300XL Light duty rotator, New €70

Watson PSU W-25AM, 25A, 30Amp peak. As new. €120.00

NES 10-2 DSP Speaker . New €140.00
Phone 061-397004

Wanted: Old issues of QST Magazine. Contact EI4BZ On 087-6290574

**Members advertisements
are free**

Contest Calendar

July 2004

1st	0000-2359	RAC Canada Day Contest	
3/4th	1400-1400	VHF/UHF Field Day	
3/4th	0000-2400	Venezuelan Ind. Day Contest	CW/SSB
3/4th	1100-1059	DL DX RTTY Contest	RTTY
10/11th	1200-1200	IARU HF World Championship	CW/SSB
17/18th	1800-2100	CQ Worldwide VHF Contest	
24/25th	1200-1200	Islands On The Air Contest	CW/SSB
24/25th	0000-2400	Russian RTTY WW Contest	

August 2004

7/8th	0001-2359	10-10 Int. Summer Contest	SSB
14/15th	0000-2359	Worked All Europe DX Contest	CW
21/22nd	1200-1200	Keymans Club of Japan Contest	CW
21/22nd	1200-1200	SEANET Contest	
28th	0700-2200	Hawaii QSO Party	
28/29th	1200-1200	TOEC WW Grid Contest	CW
28/29th	1200-1200	YO HF DX Contest	
29th	1400-1600 (local)	IRTS 2m Counties Contest	

New Morse Code Character

The International Morse code officially gained a new character on May the 3rd last. That's when the now-familiar "@" symbol joined the Morse lexicon as the letters "AC" run together (di-dah-dah-di-dah-dit).

Known as the "commercial at" or "commat," the @ symbol never rose to the level of usage that demanded a unique Morse character until it gained currency as a critical component of e-mail addresses during the past decade or so.

Last December, an ITU Study Group agreed on the wording of a Draft New Recommendation that specifies the international Morse code character set and transmission procedures and includes the new Morse code character.



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CUSHCRAFT:	HF / VHF / UHF Antennae
TENNADYNE:	HF Log Periodic Antennae

GARMIN: GPS -Handheld / Portable / Fixed - Land / Air / Sea
MICROAIR: Aero Transceiver & Transponders
MASTERVOLT: UPS - Back-Up Power systems
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